SOME STUDIES IN SECULARIZATION WITH REFERENCE TO WORSHIP, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, AND THE SITUATION IN SCOTLAND

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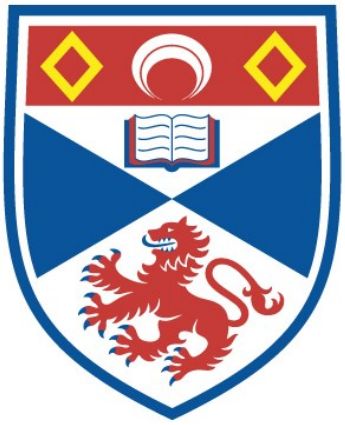

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SOME STUDIES IN SECULARIZATION;

WITH REFERENCE TO WORSHIP, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION,

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being a thesis presented in candidature for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

Secularization is a term widely used in both sociology and theology, and it bears many meanings. It refers to a process of change, and is logically distinct from both secularism and the concept of the secular society. The complexity of the process prohibits determination of its causes, but urbanisation, and the growth of man's technological mastery of his environment are frequently associated with it. Sociologically secularization may be understood in terms of several different processes, which describe changes in the form and status of religious beliefs and institutions, and their relationship to the wider society. Theological aspects of secularization centre around changing views of God, man, the world and the Church. Fundamental to both approaches to secularization is the concept of desacralization, and the change from a sacral to a secular view of the universe.

The implications of secularization have particular relevance for worship. With the breakdown of traditional views of the relationship between the sacred and the secular, worship is challenged. If it is to be true to the secularized society, it must be more flexible, seeking relevant forms, symbols, expressions and communal settings.

Secularization is demonstrated by the changing place of religion in education. The provision of education has moved out of the hands of the Churches, and the teaching of Religious Education in state schools is legally required. The study of religion has become increasingly objectified and differentiated from the religious institutions, and has to conform to the same educational criteria as other subjects.

In Scotland, the impact of secularization appears to have been limited. This may be due to the special status of the national Church,

as well as to the more rural ethos of the country. The limited degree of secularization is confirmed by a continuing high level of Church membership, as well as by the fact that R.E. in Scotland reveals less objectification and differentiation than that in England and Wales; the feeling of a 'Christian country' remains.

Secularization is recognised as a syndrome rather than as a unitary process; it is not new, but is particularly marked as a feature of contemporary society, being manifested in many forms. Even such apparent 'revivals' of religion as the Pentecostal Movement may be seen as a form of secularization.

Evaluations of, and responses to the process of secularization vary, but it would appear to be a continuing feature of contemporary life, demanding response in appropriate forms.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the following thesis is based on the results of research carried out by myself, that it is my own composition and that it has not previously been presented for a higher degree. The research was carried out at the University of St. Andrews under the supervision of Rev. J.D. Trotter.

CERTIFICATE

I certify that Carol Fry has fulfilled the conditions of the resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 1, and that she is qualified to submit this thesis in application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Rev. J.D. Trotter,
St. Mary's College,
University of St. Andrews.

STATEMENT

I read Theology at St. Hugh's College, Oxford (1964 - 67), and was placed in the Second Class in the Final Honour School of Theology, 1967. I graduated B.A. (1967) and M.A. (1971). In 1968 I gained the Postgraduate Certificate in Education at the University of London Institute of Education. In April 1971 I was admitted as a research student for the degree of Ph. D. at the University of St. Andrews.

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SECTION 1

S E C U L A R I Z A T I O N

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Secularization is a widely used term, capable of bearing a considerable number of meanings. In addition to its more general applications, it has a number of specific meanings in theology and in sociology. This section will attempt to review some of these uses, and to outline some bases for their classification. After a general introduction, the sociological ideas will first be considered, as they lend themselves more readily to categorisation than do the theological concepts. This classification will follow Shiner's[1] analysis of types of secularization. Whilst for the sake of convenience, the terms 'sociological' and 'theological' will be employed to describe varieties of secularization, it is not possible to maintain too rigid a distinction between these types, as much of the sociological work shows the influence of theology[2], and, conversely, theological writing is sometimes informed by sociological ideas[3]. Therefore, whilst for the sake of order, some distinction between the sociological and theological approaches must be made, these approaches will represent broad general areas, and there will inevitably be some overlapping. Such an overlap may be said to be implicit in the nature of secularization, and it may also be that much of the ambiguity in the use of the term is due to the lack of dialogue between the two disciplines[4].

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1 Shiner, L., 'The concept of secularization in empirical research', Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, VI(2), 1967, pp.207-20.

2 e.g., Peter Berger, in The Social Reality of Religion (Faber, 1969), employs various categories from O.T. theology in his description of desacralization. (For a discussion of this see ch. 3 of this thesis).

3 This is to be found, for example, in such a work as Davies, J.G., Every Day God, S.C.M., 1973.

4 On this point, cf. Gill, R., The Social Context of Theology, Mowbray, 1975, esp. p.3.

There is also the significant, though smaller, field covered by some writers[5] who are neither theologians nor sociologists, but who are concerned with the cultural aspects of secularization. These cultural aspects will be considered in this chapter, together with a number of basic questions about secularization.

The term 'secularization'.

> 'Secularization has become a household word known to all, used as if its meaning were clear, but it does not excel in clarity at all.'[6]

It will be one of the purposes of this section to demonstrate and discuss the range of sometimes conflicting meanings which the term has acquired.

Early uses of the word, however, appear to have been rather more specific. 'Secularization' has as its root the Latin 'saeculum', which means an age or lifetime[7]. In English usage the basic definition is,

> 'The conversion of an ecclesiastical or religious institution or its property to secular possession and use; the conversion of an ecclesiastical state or sovereignty to a lay one.'[8]

This definition really implies what one might prefer to call

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5 e.g. Macintyre, A., Secularization and Moral Change, O.U.P., 1967, and Eliot, T.S., The Idea of a Christian Society, Faber, 1939.

6 Bolle, K.W., 'Secularization as a problem for the history of religions', Comparative Studies in Society and History, XII(3), 1970, p.243.

7 The meanings of saeculum are given as, A (i) the ordinary lifetime of the human species; (ii) the human race living in a particular age; (iii) the spirit of the age or times; B (i) the utmost lifetime of a man, - a century; (ii) an infinitely long period or age; C, like the Biblical עולם the world, worldliness; D, Heathenism (eccl. Latin). (Lewis, C.T. and Short, C., A Latin Dictionary, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1907.)

8 The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, O.U.P., 1959.

'laicization'. A similar meaning underlies one of the early uses of 'secularization', at the discussions prior to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648[9]. In Roman Canon law the term has a comparable meaning for it denotes the return to 'the world' of a person in Holy Orders[10]. Any lack of ambiguity, however, stops here, for as Shiner has said,

> 'About the only thing that can be said with certainty of the concept of secularization is that one can seldom be certain of exactly what is meant by it.'[11]

It is important to make the distinction between the terms secularization and secularism. The maintenance of this distinction is not dependent upon the difficult task of reaching a definition of secularization, for the basis of the distinction lies in the fact that whereas secularization must be seen as essentially a process, secularism is a more rigid ideology[12]. Traditionally, the term 'secularism' has been associated with such names as Holyoake and Bradlaugh, and the groups with which they were involved[13]. Secularism in the strict sense should therefore be seen as a technical term for such philosophical movements. However, it would appear that the attitudes of these groups

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9 cf. Berger, op.cit., p.112.

10 ibid., p.112.

11 Shiner, L., 'The meanings of secularization', in Childress, J.F., and Harned, D.B., Secularization and the Protestant Prospect, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1970, p.30.

12 This distinction between secularization and secularism is expanded by van Leeuwen who writes that,
'The first is a continuing historical process, the second a fixed and absolutized ideology with a tendency towards pagan or nihilistic totalitarianism. The relation of the Christian Church to the advancing history of secularization is in any event a positive one, it carries responsibility and is ultimately concerned and involved with what that process brings in its train...'. van Leeuwen, A.T., Christianity in World History, Edinburgh House Press, London, 1964, p.334.

13 The term was used in 1851 to describe the philosophical and ethical system of G.J. Holyoake. This system was characterised by its total lack of reference to God, the Bible or a future life. Charles Bradlaugh (1833-91) was president of the London Secular Society, and thus a prominent exponent of a 'secularist' view of life. cf. Richardson, A., 'Secularism', in A Dictionary of Christian Theology, S.C.M., 1969, p.311. cf. also Shiner, op.cit, p.208.

were implicitly accepted by a much wider section of the community, and, as Horace Mann reported in 1851,

> '. . This is the creed which probably with most exactness indicates the faith which virtually, though not professedly, is entertained by the masses of our working population, by skilled and unskilled labourer alike . . They are unconscious secularists, engrossed by the demands, the trials or the pleasures of the passing hour, ignorant or careless of a future. .'[14]

As will be demonstrated below, secularism is by no means the logical outcome of the process of secularization, nor is it to be equated with the attitudes of the 'secular society'.

The general, and often imprecise, use of the term secularization, frequently has some reference to the position of modern man in technological society, living the depersonalised life of 'technopolis'[15]. Here, man no longer stands in the same position with regard to religion as did his ancestors, and public roles formerly taken by religion have often been taken over by the state. On this understanding, secularization as a general process has been seen as effective over several centuries.

> 'With the rise of nationalism and under the stimulation of the Christian humanism of the Renaissance, European man ... demanded and obtained freedom from clerical tutelage and all that this implied . . . . By the middle of the twentieth century this process has been more or less completed .. . . In the period of nearly nine centuries since Gregory VII on his accession to the Papacy wrote to the 'nations' to remind them that from the days of St. Peter the see of Rome had been their lord and master, or humbled the Holy Roman Emperor at Canossa, to the day when Pope Paul flew across the Atlantic to appeal to the United Nations in New York, the process of secularization has been completed.....'[16]

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14 Mann, H., Census of 1851, Report on Religious Worship, quoted in Wickham, E.R., Church and People in an Industrial City, Lutterworth, 1957, pp. 186-7.

15 This is the term used by Harvey Cox to epitomise contemporary Western urban life (The Secular City, Penguin, 1968).

16 Richardson, A., Religion in Contemporary Debate, S.C.M., 1965, p.43.

Two factors which will be discussed below, man's increasingly dominant status in the world, and the concept of the secular society, may be taken as symptomatic of secularization in this rather general sense. They do not characterise the process but are pointers to its existence. They are indicative of some process of change in the Western world from the earlier, religiously dominated orientation of society. It is this shift in man's thinking and outlook, from a religious to a more worldly framework, that is, in the broadest terms, what is commonly meant by secularization.

The anthropocentric view of life

The first of these features symptomatic of secularization is the change from a theocentric to an anthropocentric view of life and of the world. This change underlies a number of ideas of secularization and will be developed more fully later. It is at its most explicit in the theological concept of 'man come of age'[17].

This change may be said to be mainly due to the growth of man's scientific and technological mastery of his environment, which has enabled him to come to terms with many natural forces and to harness them to his own advantage. Whilst the ability to be directly involved in such advances is limited to a comparatively small number of people, the known existence of the ability affects the attitudes of many[18]. Whereas formerly, the cause of, or reason for, illness might have been

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17 see ch.4 of this section.
18 This links particularly with the desacralization theories of secularization which will be discussed below, ch.3.

sought in personal sin or failure[19], the approach in contemporary society would be to seek the scientific cause of the disease, and then to attempt to treat, if not to cure it. This example of personal physical suffering is only one aspect of the whole range of man's approaches to his environment, but the same shift in attitude from a theocentric approach to one based on the assumption of man's ability to control, or at least to modify, the natural forces affecting him can be found in many other areas. Thus,

> 'For all practical purposes people think and behave as though there were no God at the centre of things. He makes no difference to their world-view. . . . Our culture is man-centred rather than God-centred...'[20]

The Secular Society

The relationship of the secular society to the process of secularization is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand it may be argued that the secular society should be seen as the logical outcome of the process, whilst on the other it can be said that such a society is itself a spur to secularization. This ambiguity is perhaps inevitable, because of the complexities of the term secularization. Moreover, whilst it is frequently stressed that secularization is a continuing

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19 The view that suffering was caused by sin is clearly evident in Biblical thought, for example. The origin-stories of Genesis show the belief that sin is the cause of suffering in general, Gen.3:14-19. The fact that so much of the book of Job is concerned with the problem of the suffering of the innocent shows the persistence of the popular views on the cause of suffering. The view is also present in many of the N.T. healings, e.g. Matt. 9:2-8. It is epitomised in Jn. 9:2, where the question is asked, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents?' Such a view of the cause of suffering is not restricted to Biblical times. Sixteenth and seventeenth century persistences of it are documented by Keith Thomas in Religion and the Decline of Magic, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1971, esp. pp.85-9 and 109-10. Even in more recent times there has still been some tendency for the question 'What have we done to deserve this?' to be asked at times of suffering or natural disaster.

20 Barry, F.R., Secular and Supernatural, S.C.M., 1969, p.13.

historical process, the concept of the secular society might seem to suggest something more absolute[21]. Therefore, although the idea of the 'secular society' as described by a number of writers will be considered briefly here, at several points in the thesis[22] the more clumsy but less absolute terms 'society undergoing secularization' or 'secularized society' will be employed.

The secular society has been described as being,

> 'a society or people that has not committed itself to any particular view of ultimate truth. The members of the society disagree about the ultimate meaning of the universe and the place of man in it. It is a pluralist society, including within itself a variety of attitudes about ultimate beliefs and values .. . . The social order is not grounded upon . . . an ideology hostile to religion . . . . The social consensus is secular not as excluding the sacred but as prescinding from it in building a social order on a minimum of common principles and aims acceptable to men who differ profoundly on any question concerning the transcendent or sacred.'[23]

This statement brings out a number of important features of a secular society, of which the first, and perhaps most significant, is pluralism. As Davis suggests, a pluralistic society is one in which there may found a wide variety of ideological beliefs and attitudes, all of which are of potentially equal status in the community[24]. Such a society will not only be tolerant of a wide variety of beliefs,

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21 This is an implication of viewing the secular society as the necessary outcome of secularization. As will be demonstrated, absoluteness is by no means inevitable, for the secular society is often characterised by openness and flexibility.

22 Especially sections 2 and 3.

23 Davis, C., God's Grace in History, Fontana, 1966, pp.31-2.

24 Pluralism has been well-defined by W.A. visser 't Hooft, as describing,

> 'a situation in which various religious, philosophical or ideological conceptions live side by side, and in which none of them holds a privileged status.' ('Pluralism - temptation or opportunity', The Ecumenical Review, XVIII (2), 1966, p.129.)

but is likely to wish to encourage and maintain such diversity[25], as this freedom will be important to it. Because of the importance of this freedom, the pluralism is unlikely to be to the exclusion of any one religion. The key emphasis of the secular, pluralistic society is on openness to a wide variety of attitudes and beliefs, rather than on hostility towards any one particular ideology[26]. It has also been argued that pluralism may be,

> '.. taken to be the mark of a modern society as distinct from a primitive one. It could even be said that the index of a society's maturity is its pluralism, its capacity not only to tolerate, but to maintain and even to encourage the co-existence within its bosom of diverse groups of people.....'[27]

In societies such as those of many large conurbations in contemporary Britain, where there are significant communities of Moslems, Hindus and Sikhs, pluralism would appear to be evident. There is, however, a danger in too readily equating such situations with pluralism, for these groups are all religious, and, as such, have much in common in their general outlook on life[28]. Pluralism also contains within itself non-religious viewpoints. Thus it has been claimed that despite the presence of large numbers of members of non-Christian religions, contemporary Britain is less pluralistic than it was in earlier times[29]. Such an argument, however, appears rather difficult to substantiate from the limited evidence available.

As has been argued above, pluralism in no sense excludes religion.

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25 cf. Hyde, K.E., 'The home, the community and the peer group', in Smart, N., and Horder, D., New Movements in Religious Education, Maurice Temple Smith, 1975, pp.45-6.

26 A view of the nature of a secular society expressed at the W.C.C. World Conference on Church and Society, Geneva, 1966, pp.158-9.

27 Macquarrie, J., Christian Unity and Christian Diversity, S.C.M., 1975, p.10. He also expounds a positive view of pluralism in the following chapter.

28 Some of the implications of the multi-faith community (for secularization) will be mentioned in section 3.

29 cf. Martin, D.A., 'The secularization question', Theology, LXXVI, 1973, p.86.

Nevertheless, an absence of, or at least a decline in religion, is frequently seen as a further characteristic of the secular society[30]. On this basis, Macintyre[31] claims that Britain was a secular society well back into the nineteenth century, and in support of this quotes Engels' statement,

> '. . . and it has come to this that agnosticism though not yet considered the thing quite so much as the Church of England is yet very nearly on a par as far as respectability goes with Baptism, and decidedly ranks above the Salvation Army.'[32]

If such 'public atheism' is to be a major criterion for regarding a society as secular, then clearly many societies merit this description, and these are by no means limited to the modern world[33]. Such periods of public atheism can be found over many centuries[34], and it is claimed that they have often proved to be very constructive for religion in the times which followed[35]. For example, Western civilization itself may be said to date from a period of very radical public atheism, the fifth to fourth centuries B.C., the period in which the religion of the Greek πολις was shattered by the crisis of belief which resulted from the rise and spread of Persian cosmopolitanism[36].

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30 The question of the decline of religion is of major importance as a secularization theory, and will be considered fully in ch.2.

31 op.cit., pp.9-18.

32 Engels, F., Socialism; Utopian and Scientific, preface to the first English edition, 1892, quoted in Macintyre, p.9.

33 This raises many questions about levels of religious activity in various centuries. This again will be considered more fully in ch.2.

34 The question of these periods of 'public atheism' is discussed in Richardson, H., Theology for a New World, S.C.M., 1967, esp. pp.3-6. He lists as examples the 5th-4th centuries B.C., the 13th century, A.D., when Augustinian Christianity was shattered by Islamic science and technology, and the 16th century, when radical scepticism threatened the established values.

35 ibid., p.4.

36 ibid., p.3.

In addition to having the features of pluralism and public atheism, concepts of the secular society frequently include reference to rationality. This means that the secular society emphasises the use of rational procedures in decision-making[37], and the following of bureaucratic, rather than charismatic forms of government[38]. The emphasis on the use of rational procedures in the secular society should not, however, be taken to imply that the 'religious' society is thought to be non-rational[39]. It is rather that in the two societies different criteria count as reasons, and not that reasons are given in the one and not in the other.

A further characteristic of the secular society, closely related to both its pluralism and its rationality, is tolerance. This is tolerance in the sense of openness to the possibility of new ideas and attitudes rather than in the sense of a lack of prejudice or of the automatic acceptance of new religious or ideological beliefs. Thus the tolerance of the secular society does not mean that all forms of belief or behaviour, however apparently devious, are accepted, but rather that there is flexibility, and opportunity for the beliefs of new groups to be judged on their merits, rather than being necessarily condemned for their failure to conform to the views of one dominant religious body. In other respects, much prejudice may still remain. Such a lack of consensus has been taken by Munby[40] to mean that the secular society is one without official images, for,

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37 cf. Pratt, V., Religion and Secularization, Macmillan, 1970 p.4.
38 For the classic sociological model of bureaucracy, see Gerth, H.H. and Mills, C.W., From Max Weber, Essays in Sociology, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1948, pp.196-244, but esp. 196-8.
39 Pratt, op.cit., p.4.
40 Munby, D.L., The Idea of a Secular Society, O.U.P., 1963.

> '. . if there are no common aims, there cannot be a common set of images reflecting the common ideals and emotions of everyone. Nor can there be any common ideal types of behaviour for universal application.'[41]

Whilst there is evident truth in such a statement, pluralism does not necessarily negate the possibility of the existence of common aims or values within a society. Many social and ethical values can transcend the boundaries of the religious and ideological groups within the community.

The Causes of Secularization.

The causes of secularization are complex, and as it will be argued that there can be no one definition of this process, so it follows that there can be no single cause. The problem of causation is further complicated by the differences between sociological and theological approaches to secularization. With the sociological types of secularization it is possible to look for direct causes, which are usually to be sought in changes in society either today or in the past. For the theological views, however, causes are much more likely to lie in the realm of ideas, and therefore, to be considerably less direct and tangible. Thus in these areas, one is not looking so much for direct causes as for circumstances facilitating a change in ideas.

It is customary to associate the growth of secularization with the spread of urbanisation, which, in turn, is frequently seen as a result of industrialisation and technological changes. It is Berger's view that it is possible to see the whole modern economic process as being a 'carrier' of secularization, this 'carrier' having its roots

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41 ibid., pp.30-31.

in capitalist Western economy[42]. In the context of this emphasis on industrial society, the psychological factors involved in such a society have also been seen as contributing to secularization[43]. Of particular significance here are the changes in cognitive attitudes of the members of the society, which in turn may facilitate a number of aspects of secularization. Taking secularization in the sense of the decline of religious institutions[44], the argument is found that such institutions are adversely affected to the extent that an area is dominated by heavy industry, and that religious practice declines proportionately with the size of the urban concentration[45].

However, this direct causative connection between urbanisation and secularization cannot be too readily accepted. For it may be argued that industrialisation and urbanisation are not, on their own, sufficient to account for secularization. If these two factors alone were capable of producing the process, then it may be asked why secularization did not occur in the same way in the United States[46].

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42 Berger, P.L., op.cit., pp.114-6.

43 This argument is developed by Aquaviva, S.S., 'Psychology of dechristianization in the dynamics of the industrial society', Social Compass, VII (3), 1960, pp.209-25.

44 The first of Shiner's six categories of secularization, which will be examined in detail in ch.2.

45 cf. Martin, D.A., 'Notes for a general theory of secularization', European Journal of Sociology, X (2), 1969, pp.193-4. This factor is seen as one of several broad tendencies towards secularization in industrial society. Others are that religious institutions are more adversely affected if the area concerned is homogeneously proletarian; and that geographical and social mobility erodes stable religious communities organised on a territorial basis, and that the church becomes institutionally differentiated in response to the differentiation of societies.

46 This question is raised by Macintyre (op.cit. pp.31-2) who to some extent answers it by examining the relationship between Church and society in both Britain and the U.S.A., and concluding that religion has survived in America only by itself becoming secular (ibid., pp.32-3) In spite of this partial answer, Macintyre's question would still seem to be valid and to point to a fundamental weakness in the argument that secularization can be attributed to industrialisation.

Moreover the industrialisation/urbanisation argument tends, ultimately to 'blame' the Industrial Revolution for secularization. However, this radical social upheaval,

> 'did not by any means immediately or simply sweep away the old piety.'[47]

It would appear, however, that the Industrial Revolution did serve to accelerate the pace of secularising changes which had already been operative in English society for many years[48], so that whilst it cannot be seen as the cause of the fact of secularization, it may be the cause of the force which secularization had on society. Although, as will be argued below, it is mistaken to think of Victorian Britain as having a mainly Church-going population, and there are major difficulties in interpreting the scanty evidence that is available, it would seem that in many areas of England, including those which would have been most drastically affected by the Industrial Revolution, Church-going remained at least as strong as it had before the onset of industrialisation[49].

Whilst stress has been laid on urbanisation as an important factor in secularization (and throughout this thesis the main reference will be to modern urban society), quite different types of causes can be sought. Thus the changing status of man and religion which resulted from the Reformation has been seen as giving rise to secularization[50]. This argument would seem to bear some truth. It is claimed that the

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47 Marty, M., The Modern Schism, Harper and Row, 1969, p.72.
48 Gilbert, A.D., Religion and Society in Industrial England, Longman, 1976, p.207.
49 Marty, M., op.cit., p.72.
50 cf. Pinder, R., 'Religious change in the process of secularization', Sociological Review, XIX (3), 1971, pp.343-63. In this article the focus is on the Methodist Renewal Group, but the Reformation is the constant background model.

the essence of the Reformation may be seen as lying in the freedom it gave to the individual, as opposed to the pre-Reformation period in which the Church seemed to be of almost oppressive importance. Thus the Reformation, by emphasising justification by the faith of the individual, rather than by the 'works' of institutional religion, asserted this new freedom and status of the individual vis-a-vis his religion.

> 'The Reformation was paradoxically the crucible of religionization and secularization - in the process of every man becoming a monk, the value of this world was affirmed.'[51]

A further causative factor of secularization arising from the Reformation was in the realm of dedivinization[52], for the Reformation saw a radical effort to re-establish the divisions between religion and magic, and to abolish all magical elements from the Church[53].

As has already been emphasised, secularization is a process. Thus it is necessary to consider not only initial causes, but also factors perpetuating that process. It would appear that secularization is self-perpetuating, in that it leads to changes which then facilitate further secularization. There are a number of features of secularization which contribute particularly to this self-perpetuating process, and these have been listed as,

a) a relative autonomy in all areas of human thought,

b) the provision through human agencies of help for men in most areas of their existence,

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51 ibid., p.344.
52 see ch.3.
53 cf. Budd, S., Sociologists and Religion, Collier-Macmillan, 1973, pp.124-5. The whole question of the decline of magic has been discussed very fully in Thomas, op.cit.

c) opportunities for men to become adult,

d) the recognition that human knowledge is not absolute but tentative,

e) the realisation of the 'oneness' of the world[54].

It may readily be seen that an increased awareness of any or all of these factors will tend to lead to further secularization.

As has been stated already, it is not easy to think in terms of direct or absolute causes of the theological types of secularization. The features which have been listed above could as well apply to theological as to sociological approaches to the process. On the whole, however, comment on the facilitating circumstances of the theological types of secularization will be made in the context of the general discussion of those types. There is, nevertheless, one very significant theological factor which may be regarded as a cause. This is the crisis in theology and belief epitomised by the 'death of God' movement of the mid- 1960's[55]. This crisis raised the whole question of the plausibility of the existing theological structure. Once a situation arises in which this structure is questioned, then there is opportunity for religious concepts to compete freely in what Berger has described as the open market-place of ideas[56], thereby allowing for the possibility of their total rejection. Thus if there is an apparent loss of confidence in a formerly dominant religious or ideological belief, then this will facilitate the appearance of a number of alternative ideological positions. The question arises as

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54 Pittenger, N., The Christian Situation Today, Epworth, 1969, pp.29-38.

55 The relationship of this to the process of secularization will be discussed in ch.4.

56 Berger, P.L., op.cit., pp.141-2, and discussed more generally throughout pp.131-56.

to whether secularization leads to this kind of pluralism, or whether the pluralism comes first, in which case it may be regarded as a cause of secularization. It would seem likely that pluralism and secularization are in many ways mutually causative.

The Secularization Hypothesis.

The complexities and variety of meanings of the term secularization make it difficult to assess the wide-ranging claims that such a process is, in fact, occurring. The validity of the hypothesis is accepted here, although with some reservation in the case of certain types of secularization theory. (Consideration of this question will follow in the discussion of particular theories.)

One form of reservation about the secularization hypothesis is that which regards secularization as a 'social myth'. Thus it is said that,

> 'The concept of secularization, one of the most widespread of the social myths which attempt to explain the modern world, receives an inexplicably heterogeneous assent.'[57]

The secularization hypothesis has been seen to fit the model of a 'social myth' on three major criteria[58]. Firstly, there is a distortion of the facts of human existence by the idealisation of a base-line society; secondly, there is the assumption that the impact of religion on society is uniformly distributed throughout that society, and thirdly, there is a tendency to categorise religion, without

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57 Cox, J., 'Secularization and social history', Theology, LXXVIII (656), 1975, p.90.

58 Glasner, P.E., ' 'Idealisation' and the social myth of secularization' in Hill, M., (ed), A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain, VIII, 1975, pp.7-14.

recognition of the complexity of analysis of the concepts involved[59]. On these grounds, Glasner argues that the concept of secularization has been turned into a social myth. Whilst one may agree with this approach, particularly on the issue of 'idealisation'[60], such criticisms would not necessarily appear to contradict the central validity of the hypothesis as a whole[61].

Many would agree that some process of the kind described by the term 'secularization' is operative, to a greater or lesser extent, although there is much disagreement as to its nature and real cause. There is also debate on the question of its absoluteness. Berger[62], for example, expresses doubt as to whether secularization is as all-embracing as has sometimes been thought. He argues that considerable numbers of,

> 'the specimen 'modern man' have not lost a propensity for awe, for the uncanny, for all those possibilities that are legislated against by canons of secularized rationality.'[63]

Furthermore, some would feel that the process of secularization really represents a change of emphasis rather than any more absolute change in the status of religion in society[64]. So von Weizsäcker can say,

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59 ibid., pp.7-9.

60 This is particularly appropriate in the case of the decline of religion theory of secularization, where there is a tendency to idealise some supposed 'golden age' of religious activity. This question will be considered in ch.2.

61 Another form of the 'social myth' challenge to secularization is the view that the process exists in the minds of the intelligentsia at least as much as it belongs to the real world. (cf. Robertson, R., 'Sociologists and secularization', Sociology, V (3), 1971, p.3.10.

62 Berger, P.L., A Rumour of Angels, Penguin, 1971.

63 ibid., p.39.

64 This change of emphasis is also illustrated by Marty's view that secularization is not so much the disappearance of religion as its relocation (op.cit., p.11).

> 'The modern world still has the structure of a religious world; the drawing of the picture is still, as it were, Christian, even if all the colours have changed.'[65]

Such caution about the concept of secularization, is, however, largely a matter of degree. On the whole, there is a fairly general consensus that some process of change, along the general lines indicated by the term secularization, is operative. As will be shown by the discussion in the next chapter, there is a considerable range of emphases, and many writers restrict their use of 'secularization' to one limited area. The term itself has undergone considerable criticism, notably from Martin[66], who feels that it has too many overtones to be useful, and concludes,

> '. . . Values doubtless intrude into every sociological formulation, but the more egregious versions of ideological distortion can be avoided. The word secularization is too closely linked to such distortions to be retained. Its very use encourages us to avoid studies of the impact of, for example, geographic and social mobility on religious practice, in favour of cloudy generalizations. Secularization should be erased from the sociological dictionary.'[67]

It is, perhaps, significant, that Martin has nevertheless retained the word, and continues to be concerned with certain aspects of the process which it describes[68].

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65 von Weizsäcker, C.F., The Relevance of Science, Collins, 1964, p.162.

66 Martin, D.A., 'Towards eliminating the concept of secularization', Penguin Survey of the Social Sciences, 1965, reprinted in Martin, D.A., The Religious and the Secular, R.K.P., 1969, pp.9-22.

67 ibid., p.22.

68 e.g. 'Some utopian aspects of the concept of secularization', International Yearbook for the Sociology of Religion, II, 1966, pp.87-97; 'Notes for a general theory of secularization', European Journal of Sociology, X (2), 1969, pp.192-201; 'Great Britain - England' in Mol, H., Western Religion, Mouton, The Hague, 1972, pp.229-47; 'The secularization question', Theology, LXXVI, 1973, pp.81-7.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF SECULARIZATION

Introduction

In the preceding discussion of the secularization hypothesis, its meaning, and the causes of the process, a number of different uses of the concept emerged. In order to attempt to analyse some of these more fully, it is convenient to employ Shiner's classification of secularization theories[1]. His six categories are,

i) the decline of religion,
ii) conformity with this world,
iii) disengagement of society from religion,
iv) the transposition of religious beliefs and institutions,
v) the desacralization of the world,
vi) the movement from a sacred to a secular society[2].

Shiner agreed with Martin that the term secularization is so wide as to have little meaning, but saw that no moratorium on its use was likely[3], and so stated that the word could still be used with significance for three of these categories, viz., the disengagement of society from religion, the transposition of religious beliefs and institutions, and the desacralization of the world[4]. The use of Shiner's categories here is as a means of classification, and does not imply an agreement with his conclusions.

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1 Shiner, L., Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, VI (2), pp.207-20.
2 The fifth category is also of considerable theological significance, and so will be discussed last, as it forms a useful link between the sociological and theological approaches to secularization.
3 Shiner, op.cit. p.219.
4 ibid., p.219.

The decline of religion

Shiner's first category, the decline in strength and numbers of religious institutions, is one which is popularly seen as the main, or even the sole meaning of the term secularization. Alternatively, it is seen as fundamental to other meanings, though not excluding them[5]. Shiner describes secularization in this sense as the process whereby,

> '. . the previously accepted symbols, doctrines and institutions lose their prestige and influence. The culmination of secularization would be a religionless society.'[6]

This is similar to Yinger's view that secularization is the process,

> 'in which traditional religious symbols and forms have lost force and appeal.'[7]

(In theological terms, however, it is questionable whether such loss of power by traditional religious symbols and forms need or should be equated with decline. Shiner's placing of Yinger's statement in the context of the institutional decline theory might almost seem to imply that no conceptual or symbolic change can occur in religion without the possibility of resultant institutional collapse!)

This theory of secularization usually includes statements of changing patterns of church-going and of other forms of institutional participation. There are major differences in the forms of these changes in Europe and in America, and, as many secularization

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5 Such a view is held by Gill, who takes the decline theory as a preliminary definition, but stresses that this is a minimum understanding of the concept, on which more complex analyses will be based. (op.cit., p.70.)

6 Shiner, L., op.cit., p.209.

7 Yinger, J.M., Religion, Society and the Individual, Macmillan, New York, 1957, p.119.

theorists write from an American standpoint, it is important to see the nature of these distinctions. They also account for the apparent ambivalence of some writers towards secularization. For example, Berger is prepared to show a limited acceptance of the secularization hypothesis,

> ' . . One can say with some confidence that Churchly religiosity, (that is, religious belief and practice within the traditions of the principal Christian Churches) has been on the decline in modern society. In Europe this has generally taken the form of progressive decline in institutional participation, (attendance at worship, use of the sacraments and the like), though there are important class differences in this. In America, on the contrary, there has been an increase in participation, (as measured by Church membership figures), though there are good reasons to think that the motives for participation have changed greatly from the traditional ones. It is safe to say that, compared to earlier historical periods, fewer Americans today adhere to the Churches out of a burning desire for salvation from sin and hellfire, while many do so out of a desire to provide moral instruction for their children and direction for their family life, or just because it is part of the life-style of their neighbourhood.'[8]

This statement draws out clearly one of the apparent ambiguities of secularization, which is particularly applicable in the American situation. This illustrates the point made earlier[9], that religion in America has survived by itself undergoing a process of secularization, predominantly of the type classed as 'conformity with this world'[10].

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8 A Rumour of Angels, p.17.
9 ch.1.
10 This will be discussed below.

Concentrating on the British situation, however, the major exponent of this type of secularization theory is Wilson. He describes secularization as the,

> 'process whereby religious thinking, practice and institutions lose social significance.'[11]

Wilson takes this form of secularization as fact, quoting such figures as confirmations and Easter Day communicants over a period from 1885 to 1962[12], and showing a significant overall decline in each of the

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11 Wilson, B.R., Religion in Secular Society, Watts, 1966, p.xiv.

12 The figures he cites are:-

1. Confirmations per 1,000 pop. aged 15 years in England.

Date	Males per 1,000 living	Females per 1,000 living	Totals: rates per 1,000 living
1885	298	443	371
1895	274	404	339
1900	234	345	290
1910	298	413	356
1920	244	342	293
1930	267	360	313
1940	226	277	251
1950	232	328	279
1960	253	379	315

(ibid.,p.7)

2. Easter Day communicants per 1,000 pop. over 15 years in England.

Date	Rate per 1,000 age 15 and over	Estimated no. of Easter Day communicants (in thousands)
1885	84	1,384
1895	92	1,746
1900	93	1,902
1910	95	2,212
1920	88	2,194
1930	80	2,285
1940	64	2,018
1950	58	1,867
1960	65	2,159
1962	63	2,158

(ibid.,p.1

areas documented. Wilson bases his ideas mainly on this kind of statistical decline, and, apart from the development of ecumenism, which he sees as a response to the situation of decline[13], he is little concerned with new and changing forms of religious activity. He admits, however, that though the process may be widespread and universal, there are some exceptions to it, particularly among immigrant communities and in sectarian movements[14]. Martin[15] produces similar figures from a wide range of religious activities to illustrate the decline theory[16]. Wilson's view of secularization is an example of the 'continuing decline' theory, often found in secularization discussion, and reflected by Shiner's statement that the culmination of this type of secularization would be a religionless society[17].

But it is possible to question the validity of the whole idea of a decline in institutional aspects of religion. This theory would appear to rest on the kind of 'idealisation' already referred to, which leads to the 'social myth' of secularization[18]. The implication is that there was, in the past, some 'peak' of near-total Church membership and attendance and that a continual decline in the importance of the whole of institutional religion has been occurring since then. The

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13 ibid., pp.142-78.
14 ibid., p.3.
15 Martin, D.A., A Sociology of English Religion, Heinemann, 1967.
16 ibid., pp.34-51. It is important to see this against the background of Martin's preceding chapter, in which he considers the historical background of dissenters and abstainers in 19th century England.
17 Shiner, L., op.cit., p.209. This type of statement may be seen as rather theoretical; in practice, and certainly from a theological point of view, one may say that secularization is concerned with modifications in the religious structures rather than with any ideological commitment to the abolition of religion. (cf. Glasner, P., 'Secularization: its limitations and usefulness in sociology', Expository Times, LXXXIII (1), 1971, p.19)
18 ch.1.

figures adduced by Wilson would appear to support this, and an examination of comparative statistics for the Church of Scotland shows a similar, if less dramatic trend[19]. Yet it must be questioned whether such figures can be regarded as evidence of a real decline, rather than of changing attitudes towards Church membership. It is impossible to assess the 'quality' of life in the Churches in previous decades, but it may well be that there is more 'life' in Churches when membership and attendance are entirely voluntary than when it is so much part of the life-style that Church-going is a normative expectation[20]. So the question remains, what is the peak from which religion is supposed to have declined? The classic 'golden ages' of religious activity are often thought to be the period of the adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, subsequent to the conversion of Constantine in the 4th century A.D., the twelfth century, and the mid-Victorian period[21]. However, such an approach is very problematical. It is based on the general assumption that people are 'not as religious as they used to be', but,

> 'the precise time of 'used to be' is not altogether clear. Hampered by the fact that there were no research data collected by social scientists a hundred years ago, the purveyors of the secularization hypothesis are forced to postulate some mysterious Golden Age in which everyone was more religious than they are now.'[22]

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19 cf. Church of Scotland, Year Book, Edinburgh, annual publication. Figures will not be cited here as the whole question of secularization in Scotland will be the subject of section 4 of this thesis.

20 cf. Wilson, B.R., 'The Anglican Church in decline', New Society, XXX, (635), 1974, pp.606-8.

21 cf. Hill, M., A Sociology of Religion, Heinemann, 1973, pp.232-3. The severity of the 'troughs' of religion between the last of these so-called 'peaks' is well-documented by Gilbert, who argues that habits of religion or irreligion are taken for granted from one generation to another, and thus become normative in these communities. (Gilbert, A.D., op,cit., pp.6-8)

22 Greeley, A.M., 'Religion in a secular society', Social Research, XLI (2), 1974, p.227.

However, it is not possible to delineate any clear picture of such 'Golden Ages', not only because of the lack of statistical evidence[23] from most of these periods, but also because of the more fundamental problem of the lack of clear indications of the real significance of religious participation in any given period. It would seem that we must accept Thomas'[24] judgement that,

> '. . we do not know enough about the religious beliefs and practices of our remote ancestors to be certain of the extent to which religious faith and practice have actually declined.'[25]

Only from one of these supposed 'Golden Ages', the Victorian period, does there emerge anything approaching evidence of the levels of religious practice and participation. The religious census of 1851[26], while based on what must now be seen as rather crude sampling methods, did at least provide an outline of practice in the period. For example, on the census Sunday, March 30th, it was estimated that out of a population of 17,927,609 in England and Wales, some 7,261,032 were in Church[27]. It also provided some crucial statistics on the high correlation between proportion of attendance and the size of

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23 When secularization is seen solely in the sense of decline, then this lack of evidence acquires particular significance,
'we shall never know whether or not religion has declined until we know how important it was in the past, and thus neither historians nor sociologists have succeeded in confirming or refuting the concept of secularization.' Cox, J., op.cit., p.91.

24 Religion and the Decline of Magic

25 ibid., p.173.

26 Mann, H., Census of 1851, (C.1690): Report on Religious Worship.

27 It was also calculated somehow, that there were 5,288,294 who could have been in Church, but were not. (cf. Marty, op.cit., p.74)

town; the larger the town, the lower the proportion[28]. This conclusion linked with other evidence from the Victorian period seems to confirm this urban decline in religion. One particular example of this may be seen in changing attitudes to Sunday. In 1843 it was written that the,

> 'crowds which make their way through the suburbs of our great cities towards the country of the Lord's Day, especially in the neighbourhood of London . . . . . convey a most unfavourable impression with regard to the condition of the religious feeling in the case of a large proportion of our people, both in the lower and the middle classes.'[29]

Because the social conditions and the general situation have changed so drastically between the second half of the 19th century and the second half of the 20th century, it is difficult to make any valid comparisons between the two periods, or to try to distinguish developing trends. Nevertheless, it does seem to be the case that the myth of the most recent of these 'Golden Ages' must be dispelled, and hence serious questions raised concerning the decline hypothesis. Ultimately, however, one cannot continue far in the search for comparative levels

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28 'Taking all denominations together attendance of persons by counties ranged between 57% and 21%, with Bedford and Huntingdon at the head and (in descending order) Surrey, Middlesex, Northumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Cumberland and London at the foot. . . some pattern emerges. Wales as a whole was distinguished by high attendance. The crucial statistics were those showing a very high correlation between proportion of attendance and size of town . . . Such figures did indeed illuminate the 'spiritual destitution' of the great cities.' (Martin, D.A., A Sociology of English Religion, p.19.)

29 Vaughan, R., The Ages of Great Cities: or modern civilization viewed in relation to intelligence, morals and religion, London, 1843, quoted in Marty, op.cit., p.73. Marty also provides evidence that just as in the 20th century, the rise in car ownership has been popularly blamed for declines in Church attendance, the railways took the same blame in the 19th century.

> '. . in the summer months, when there are Sunday excursion trains.. there is consequently great temptation, and a very great tendency to desert the Church, and to spend the Sunday as a holiday.'

(Stooks, T.F., Parliamentary Papers, 1857-8, IX, 87, quoted in Marty, p.73.)

of participation in different ages, for, as has already been suggested the real difficulty in assessing the nature of some postulated 'decline' lies not only in the lack of statistical evidence, but also in the more intangible matter of the 'quality' of religious life in any given period. It is argued that the decline in actual Church attendance is not necessarily accompanied by decline in other areas of religious activity[30]. This view is strongly supported by Luckmann, an opponent of the 'decline of religion' theory. He is prepared to accept that there may be some apparent decline in attendance at Church services, but also states that,

> 'the shrinking of Church religion, . . . is only one - and the sociologically less interesting - dimension of secularization.'[31]

Luckmann sees the real values of society as being far more indicative of religion than the numerical status of the institutions, and, in this sense, he does not see a decline[32].

Thus, the institutional decline theory can be questioned by challenging the concept of the 'peak' from which decline is supposed to have occurred. It can also be criticised more fundamentally, by questioning its whole basis in contemporary society. This challenge is most often made by American writers. One of the main such opponents of the decline theory is Greeley[33]. By referring to opinion polls and

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30 This has been argued strongly by Forster, P.G., 'Secularization in the English context: some conceptual and empirical problems', Sociological Review, XX (2), 1972, pp.158-68. In his work he employed Glock and Stark's five 'dimensions of religiosity': the experiential, the ideological, the ritualistic, the intellectual and the consequential. (Glock, C., and Stark, W., Religion and Society in Tension, Rand McNally, Chicago, 1965, pp.19-38). Forster claimed that the evidence of decline is not at all clear in some of these areas.

31 Luckmann, T., The Invisible Religion, Macmillan, New York, p.40.

32 ibid., p.40.

33 cf. especially, Greeley, A., Religion in the Year 2000, Sheed and Ward, New York, 1969,

other survey data, he claims that religious commitment is not undergoing a significant decline in contemporary America. He admits that a major change has come over religion, but sees this as being in the spheres of its influence, rather than in the amount of that influence over the large corporate structures of American society, for it has become a more explicit and individual matter, so that there is a far greater element of free choice for the individual in matters of religion[34]. Similarly, Gerharz[35] has produced figures showing a very significant rise in the percentages of the American population who are Church members, - but he proceeded to argue that the one possible reason for this might be the,

'accommodation of religion to American cultural values'[36].

Despite such claims of the continuing strength of religion in American society, it should not be thought that the secularization pattern does not apply in America; many of the writers already mentioned were basing their work on the situation in the U.S.A. Although patterns of religious allegiance are much more diverse there than in Britain, and it is therefore difficult to make comparisons, evidence can readily be produced for the decline of religion in contemporary American society. For example, surveys have shown that an increasing proportion of respondents agree with the view that religion is losing influence in

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34 Greeley, A., The Persistence of Religion, S.C.M., 1973, pp.14-5.

35 Gerharz, G.P., 'Secularization as loss of social control: toward a new theory', Sociological Analysis, XXXI (1), 1970, p.4. The figures he quotes are that 20% of U.S. citizens were church members in 1810; 41% in 1910; 57% in 1950 and 67% in 1967.

36 ibid., p.4. On this argument, religion and church-going have become part of the way of life, something to do, with little meaning in itself.

society[37]. As will be shown by discussion of some of the other categories of secularization, there can be no straightforward correlation between formal observance and ultimate conviction. Thus whereas in America there is less evidence of institutional decline, there is more evidence of this in Britain, but also a continuing popular desire to retain a Christian identity[38].

It is possible to take the challenge to the institutional decline theory even further, and thus to argue that far from being characterised by decline, contemporary society is witnessing a strong revival of interest in religion. The Charismatic Pentecostal movement is a particular example of such a revival, and, as such, raises a number of important questions about the whole concept of secularization. Pentecostalism and the associated issues will be considered in some detail in Appendix 1. It will there be argued that such movements may be seen as an inevitable part of the process of secularization. In the present context of discussion of the decline theory, it may be observed that such revivals seem to be occurring mainly, though certainly not exclusively, outside the mainstream traditional Churches. It may therefore, be postulated either that there has been an institutional decline, but that this period has now passed, and the first signs of renewal are being seen outside the established religious bodies, or that the old forms of institution are doomed to continuing decline,

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37 The following figures have been quoted; in 1957, 14% of a Gallup national sample was of the opinion that 'religion is losing its influence'. By 1962, the figure had risen to 31%, by 1965 to 45% and in 1967 it stood at 57%. (Smith, H., 'Secularization and the sacred; the contemporary scene', in Cutler, D.R., (ed) The Religious Situation, 1968, Boston, Beacon, 1968, p.583.)

38 cf. Norman, E.R., Church and Society in England, 1770-1970, O.U.P., 1976, esp. pp.424-6. This question has implication in the field of Religious Education, cf. Section III.

but that religious life is likely to continue in forms as yet scarcely recognisable as institutional.

The revival of interest in specifically religious movements is not the only form of 'revival' within the broader framework of religion. In this context must be noted a general growth of interest in the supernatural, and an increasing awareness of possibilities other than the merely material[39]. Numerically, this form of revival is fairly small, and tends to be restricted to certain age groups, but when seen together with other more obvious forms of 'revival', such interests acquire a greater significance. So it may also be that in the more specific context of Christianity,

> '. . we have to abandon the simple identification of Christianity with the corpus Christianum, and identify as far as possible those elements split, inchoate, formless in modern society . . . . varieties of incipient awareness, formless mysteries, reverences, unfocussed rejoicings, occasions which seem to point beyond themselves without religious awareness or sacramental expression...'[40]

The American examples cited by Smith, including psychedelic experiences, which he classes as implicit religion[41], would lend support to the

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39 This interest in the supernatural is wide-ranging. It covers the rapid increase in sales of publications on all forms of the occult, the increasing practice of basically religious activities such as transcendental meditation, and the general increase in willingness to accept non-scientific approaches and theories such as those of von Danniken. (e.g. Chariots of the Gods, The Gold of the Gods, Transworld Publishers, 1969,1972).

40 Martin, D.A., Introductory comment, A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain, II, 1969, p.17. In the case of some of the features noted by Martin, it must be asked whether they really constitute a revival, or whether this implicit religion is merely the residual element of more explicit forms.

41 Smith, H., op.cit., pp.595-9. Smith writes,

> 'For the first time since the Renaissance and Reformation, western society is hearing . . the suggestion that perhaps the contemplative life is the equal of the active one. With tribalism and Strawberry Field Forever they seek the recovery of community . . . Tuning in, they approach the natural order sacramentally . . . All the spots where I have reported encountering flashes of the sacred are outside Church and synagogue, but this doesn't mean that the sacred is not continuing to show itself there, too..' (ibid., pp.597-8).

argument that religion at a rather fundamental and primitive level is undergoing some sort of revival in contemporary society.

The more explicitly religious and Christian forms of revival of religious interest belong to the type which have, historically, often bred reform and renewal within the established Churches. This is the thesis of Goodridge[42], who has argued that secularization and the 'decline' of religious practice in Western Europe in modern times should not be equated. Here, too, the question of the quality of religious life is important, for secularization may be seen as rendering irrelevant a number of once important motivations to religious practice[43], thus causing many to abandon their participation in religion. So Goodridge saw secularization as a stimulus to correctly motivated religious practice[44], which over a long period, has involved only a proportion of all worshippers.

In the category of 'decline', mention must finally be made of specifically 'irreligious' movements, as the fortunes of such organisations are often employed as a useful barometer in secularization discussion. The main studies of such groups have been the work of Campbell[45]. According to him, none of Shiner's types of secularization

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42 Goodridge, R.M., 'Relative secularization and religious practice', Sociological Analysis, XXIX (3), 1968, pp.122-35. The examples he quotes include the reforming monastic orders in the 12th century, the Lollards in the 14th and 15th centuries, the Jansenists of the 17th century and the Methodists of the 18th century. He argues that as such groups become established, the high standards originally required decline. (ibid, pp.125-6).

43 ibid., pp.127-9. He employs Pin's typology of cosmological, eternal salvation, and mystical desire motivations.

44 ibid., p.130.

45 Campbell, C., Towards a Sociology of Irreligion, Macmillan, 1971.

involves assumptions about the changing status of irreligion[46], but there are good grounds for assuming that the rise of irreligion will be associated with at least some of the forms of secularization. It would appear justifiable to use the growth of irreligion as an indication of the decline of religion.

> 'Irreligion in its organised or unorganised form can be taken as evidence of secularization and the growth of irreligious movements treated as data indicating the decline of religion in much the same way as statistics for religious membership and attendance at worship have been used.'[47]

It would seem difficult, however, to countenance such a straightforward inverse relationship as this statement implies. Membership of the various 'irreligious' movements (British Humanist Association, National Secular Society, etc) has always been small, and, by their nature, these movements could not depend on the same emotional motivations as could the Churches. Moreover, if one of the major factors in secularization is an openness to change, and a sense of the ideological freedom of modern man, then membership of a narrow 'irreligious movement' could be argued to be as anachronistic as membership of a Church. A rather more positive view of the place of irreligion with regard to secularization may be taken by seeing the theological emphasis on 'religionlessness' as providing a possible meeting point between religion and a-religion. On this basis, Demarath[48] does not see the future of either in terms of decline,

> 'Religion is hardly dead; it is even now experiencing an agonising rebirth in terms unanticipated by either the Churches or the irreligious groups in our midst.'[49]

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46 ibid., p.6.
47 ibid., p.7.
48 Demerath, N.J., 'Irreligion, a-religion and the rise of the religionless Church', Sociological Analysis, XXX (4), 1969, pp.191-203.
49 ibid., p.203.

It may be concluded that although there is some clear evidence to support the decline theory, the 'decline' category of secularization must be accepted with some reservation, and it should not be seen as of dominant importance compared with other theories of secularization.

Conformity with this world.

Shiner's second category of secularization is that of 'conformity with this world'. He writes,

> 'The religious group or the religiously informed society turns its attention away from the supernatural and becomes more and more interested in 'this world' . . . . The culmination of secularization would be a society totally absorbed with the pragmatic tasks of the present, and a religious group indistinguishable from the rest of society.'[50]

In support of his argument, Shiner cites Pfautz[51], who, in his study of Christian Science groups, attempted to draw a contrast between the use of affectual motivation, which emphasised the element of enthusiasm, and purposeful rational action, with its emphasis on material gain. He saw the movement towards the latter as being part of this type of secularization.

Reference has already been made[52] to Berger's theory of the 'open market-place' situation of religion in contemporary society. Berger has seen secularization as being the removal of religiously symbolic

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50 Shiner, L., op.cit., p.211.
51 Pfautz, H., 'The sociology of secularization; religious groups', American Journal of Sociology, LXI (2), 1955, 121-8.
52 Ch.1.

and institutional domination from sectors of society and culture[53]. Against this conceptual background he sees the idea of conformity with this world as being reflected in the present position of ecumenical relationships between the various Christian denominations, for there are parallels between this and the competitive market-place economy[54]. This raises the whole issue of ecumenism as a form of secularization. To a limited extent, it is possible to follow Wilson's theory[55] and see this as a means of survival, for, if the institutional decline theory is accepted, then the prognosis for the Churches may be better if they are united than if they are fragmented. But this understanding of the situation is limited, for it reflects the crisis which precipitated various ecumenical movements, rather than the basis of ecumenism itself. This underlying rationale may be sought in the awareness of a world civilization, and the correlative concept of world community. Thus,

> 'Civilization is in the process of becoming a planetary phenomenon. To be sure, this 'planetarization' is not a uniformization. The ethnic and cultural peculiarities continue to exist. But . . . they are now superadded to a common fund. This planetarization of civilization has aided the Christian Churches in rediscovering their ecumenical vocation, their sense of Christian universality.'[56]

In this sense, the following by the Churches of the trend of 'planetarization' must be seen as part of the pattern of 'conformity with this world'.

Alterations in the organisational structures of individual

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53 The Social Reality of Religion, p.113.
54 ibid., pp.144-8.
55 Wilson, B.R., op.cit., pp.224-5. This question will be discussed further in ch.4.
56 Mehl, R., The Sociology of Protestantism, S.C.M., 1970, pp.196-7.

denominations must also be seen as part of this process of conformity. Some examples of these will be considered below. They are of such significance that one form of secularization has been described as the,

> 'process whereby religious passion succumbs to bureaucracy, and adjusts itself to politics, power and authority.'[57]

It has frequently been noted that the structures of institutional religion are increasingly run on bureaucratic lines more readily associated with economic organisations[58]. The major Protestant denominations, many of which had originally laid great stress on congregational autonomy, would appear to be becoming increasingly centralised, but it is noteworthy that Catholicism, which has traditionally had a highly centralised organisation, is now moving in the opposite direction, with a trend towards decentralisation[59]. This would appear to have close links with the idea developed by Parsons[60] that within Catholicism secularization represents a process of privatisation[61].

A further feature of the Church in contemporary society which would seem to confirm the idea of conformity with this world is that many of the activities engaged in by the Churches are essentially mundane, and could well be organised by non-religious agencies. In

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57 Martin, D.A., The Religious and the Secular, p.23.

58 It has already been commented in ch.1 that bureaucracy may be seen as a feature of the secular society. Berger (op.cit., pp.143-5) has claimed that the use of these procedures is an important factor in ecumenicity, for it means that irrespective of theological traditions, religious groups quickly come to resemble each other sociologically.

59 Mehl, op.cit., pp.214-8.

60 Parsons, T., 'Religion in post-industrial America; the problem of secularization', Social Research, XLI (2), 1974, pp.193-225.

61 ibid., p.203.

many cases there is little that is 'sacred' about the content of the activities concerned[62].

> 'The extraordinary secularity of many of these Church organisations and suborganisations can be discerned by their justification. Whereas previously the existence of the secular within the realm of the sacred was always justified by ultimately or long-term religious arguments, most of the Church's secular arms (now) have no such foundation.'[63]

In the case of the decline of religion hypothesis, the question of a standard of comparison was raised. Similarly, with Shiner's second category, the question of the earlier nature and concerns of religion is important. The implication might seem to be that there was a time when the organisation of religion was not subject to the contemporary secular economic and bureaucratic processes. Whilst the Church has always laid stress on the possibilities of charismatic leadership, it would seem that from its earliest history it has been subject to 'normal' organisational structures. The beginnings of this can be seen even in the early Church in Jerusalem, with the appointment of the first deacons[64], whose function was to fulfil a basically administrative role. Organisational matters also appear in the Pastoral Epistles and the N.E.B. even brings the concept of a 'stipend' into 1 Tim.5:17. It is likely that this refers to an allowance, rather than to a salary scale in the modern sense of the term[65].

'Conformity with the world' implies not only that the Church's organisational structures are seen to comply with the contemporary secular and bureaucratic patterns, but also that there is an association

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62 This anticipates the question of the 'location' of the sacred, which will be discussed in ch.3.

63 Goode, E., 'Some sociological implications of religious secularization' Social Compass, XVI (1-2), 1969, p.270.

64 Acts 6:1-6.

65 cf. Barrett, C.K., The Pastoral Epistles, Oxford, 1963, pp.78-9.

of interests with those of 'the world'[66]. To say that secularization may be seen as a process of conformity to this world might seem, in the light of discussion of secularization as a phenomenon of the 20th century, to suggest that involvement with the concerns of the world is something new. But organised religion has traditionally had an association with, and a concern for political and social issues. It has been argued that Israel was the subject of a secularizing process in adapting herself to the cultural, social, economic and religious pattern of surrounding civilizations[67]. The classic example of these concerns in Christianity may be seen in the merging of the interests of Church and state in the Holy Roman Empire. The caricature of the Church of England being the 'Tory party at prayer' also reflects the convergence of religious and political interests within basically the same 'establishment' group[68]. A broader concern with political issues and other 'secular' matters is often to be found in discussions of theological ethics[69].

The question remains; what distinguishes the contemporary from the traditional situation? Clearly, one cannot look back to some period of religious history when the Church was concerned solely with 'spiritual'

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66 This topic links closely with one of the theological aspects of secularization, so the examples which follow are really illustrative of both approaches, for there is considerable overlap in this area.

67 Wendel, A., Sakularisierung in Israels Kultur, Gutersloh, 1934, cited by van Leeuwen, op.cit., p.332.

68 For a development of this relationship, see Martin, D.A., A Sociology of English Religion, pp.83-4.

69 e.g. Waddams, H., A New Introduction to Moral Theology, S.C.M. 1964, ch.2, 8 & 10.

matters, any more than to a time when it was untouched by secular organisational structures. Changes have occurred, and these would appear to be particularly in the cognitive awareness of members of the Church. For example, religious organisations will now openly admit to their secular infrastructure, and readily employ business management analysis methods and techniques[70].

The more significant area of change is in the forms of expression taken by the 'worldly' concerns of religion. The Church's concerns with the methods and problems of politics and economics, local, national and supra-national, are real and open. Unlike many earlier forms of such concerns the Church is not set over against society, providing the answers, but is concerned, as a part of that society, to be continually questioning. In this process, with the loss of dominance, the prophetic role of the religion has been regained. There is also an increasing concern that the Church should be active in these areas, rather than having the more limited role of commenting on the issues involved. Thus it has been urged that Christians should become,

> 'more courageous at translating the generalities of faith into the specifics of social and political engagement.'[71]

Issues which this concern covers include among many others, the problems

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70 In the case of the Church of England, this was made most explicit in the Paul Report (Paul, L., The Deployment and Payment of the Clergy, Church Information Office, 1964.) Other works, however, show the same basic approaches to the 'management' problems of the Church, e.g. Beveridge, W., Managing the Church, S.C.M., 1971.

71 Gill, D., 'Violence, unscrambling the rhetoric', Risk, IX (1), 1973, p.7.

of racism[72], the political questions raised by the growth of the European community[73], and environmental and ecological questions[74]. The close involvement of the Church in these and similar problems would seem to present a prima facie case of 'conformity with this world'.

The disengagement of society from religion

The third category employed by Shiner to describe the process of secularization is that of the 'disengagement of society from religion'. He states that,

> 'Society separates itself from the religious understanding which previously informed it in order to constitute itself an autonomous reality, and consequently limit religion to the sphere of private life. The culmination of this kind of secularization would be a religion of purely inward character, influencing neither institutions nor corporate

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72 The most familiar form of this is the controversial issue of World Council of Churches aid to groups concerned to combat racism, cf. Gill, D., op.cit., and W.C.C., 'Violence, non-violence and the struggle for social justice', Ecumenical Review, XXV (4) pp.430-46. There have been other calls to Christians to recognise the use of violence, if necessary, to overcome the 'violence' and oppression of racism. (cf. Morris, C., Unyoung, Uncoloured, Unpoor, Epworth Press, 1969).

73 There has been a considerable literature in this field, including British Council of Churches, Christians and the Common Market, S.C.M., 1967; Gowland, D.A., Common Market or Community, Chester House publications, 1973; and Leicester, K., Britain in Europe: the Social Responsibility of the Church, Church House, 1972.

74 Much has been written on this topic. In many cases there is an attempt to provide a theological critique of contemporary discussion of the problems, and to stress the importance of the Christian acceptance of a more limited lifestyle, thus emphasising the element of individual and corporate responsibility. cf. Derr, T.S., Ecology and Human Liberation, W.S.C.F., 1973; W.C.C., 'Population policy, social justice and the quality of life', Study Encounter, IX (4), 1973, pp.1-12; Montefiore, H., Can Man Survive?' Fontana, 1970; Francis, J., and Swan, N., Scotland in Turmoil, Church of Scotland, 1973; etc.

> action, and a society in which religion made no appearance outside the sphere of the religious group.'[75]

This type of secularization would appear to be the converse of the previous type, 'conformity with this world', in which religion and society were seen to be growing increasingly aware of their shared areas of interest. It would be wrong, however, to polarise these two types, for this latter type in many ways represents a process of specialisation, both in religion and in society as a whole. Thus, in many respects, the Church is only conforming to the patterns of the bureaucratic[76] world if it too, tends to take on more specialised roles.

This category of secularization may also be described as 'differentiation' - a term particularly associated with the name of Parsons[77]. This differentiation involves the separation of roles, and their removal to different sectors of society. In America, this is epitomised in the legal separation of Church and state. This particular form of differentiation is central to Parsons' thesis. Such differentiation is likely to lead to a weakening of the religious

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75 Shiner, L., op.cit., p.212.

76 Specialisation is one of the important features of bureaucracy; in an increasingly bureaucratic society the role of the amateur is taken over by the professional specialist, cf. Gerth, H.H., and Mills, C.W., op.cit., pp.134-5.

77 Parsons' views are developed in a number of works, but especially in 'Christianity and modern industrial society' in Tiryakian, E.A., (ed), Sociological Theory, Values, and Sociocultural Change, Free Press of Glencoe, 1963, pp.33-70; and Structure and Process in Modern Societies, New York, Free Press, 1960, pp.295-321. The classic descriptions of the basic theories of differentiation derive from Spencer. (Spencer, H., Principles of Sociology, Macmillan, 1969, pp.35-7.)

institutions, and thus it may be allied to Shiner's first category, although it is essentially and logically distinct from it. Parsons writes,

> '. . . when a previously less differentiated structure becomes differentiated into more specialized subsystems, it is in the nature of the case that, if an earlier and later structural unit bear the same name, the later version will, by comparison with the earlier, be felt to have lost certain functions and hence, perhaps, from a certain point of view, to have been weakened.'[78]

Whilst differentiation has these links with institutional decline, the two should not be confused. It may be possible for religious institutions to lose their general influence in society, and yet to maintain their levels of membership[79].

This form of secularization[80] may have a variety of manifestations. One of these is laicization. The loss of power by ecclesiastical institutions referred to in Parsons' statement is likely to lead to a process of laicization[81], and thus to a separation of roles between

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78 Structure and Process in Modern Societies, p.301.

79 This may be what has happened in America. cf. the earlier comments in this chapter on the status of religion in American society.

80 There is some disagreement on whether differentiation should be classed as secularization. In the present context, however, where the concern is with a wide range of aspects and possible meanings of secularization, rather than with one dominant interpretation, it would seem appropriate to consider differentiation as one such meaning.

81 The term 'laicization' can apply to both persons and property. Events such as the 16th century dissolution of the monasteries must therefore be seen as laicization. On this concept, cf. Martin, D.A., The Religious and the Secular, pp.49-50.

religious and secular institutions[82]. It has also been claimed[83] that the partial differentiation of the Church from other institutional spheres is a well established tendency in industrial societies. These other spheres include justice, ideological legitimation, social control, education and welfare[84]. Gerharz' phrase, 'the loss of bases of religion'[85] is a useful key to the understanding of this process; with differentiation the religious substructure of many areas of life is removed.

Whilst there are ready links between the sociological and theological aspects of 'conformity with this world', such links are less obvious in the case of this category of secularization. The closest parallels would seem to be with the concept of secularization as a historical drama[86], and the relationship between this and differentiation is well-demonstrated by van Leeuwen[87].

> 'Is not the process of emancipation from religious constraints, which is usually referred to as 'secularization', itself a product of Western Christian civilization, and has it not been set in motion by forces nurtured in the course of Christian history? Are not all the 'non-religious elements' of Western civilization - modern technology, science, democracy, capitalism, socialism, nationalism which have thrust their way into non-Western countries and been welcomed there, among the fruits of that very civilization which was formed and driven forward by the dynamic spirit of Christianity? . . . Is it not

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82 In Britain this is to be seen particularly in therapeutic and educational institutions. In both of these areas, once almost entirely in the hands of the Church, the state now has a very large measure of control. For some of the implications of this for the educational aspects, see Section 3.

83 Martin, D.A., European Journal of Sociology, X (2), p.194.

84 ibid., p.194.

85 op.cit., p.3.

86 cf. ch.4.

87 Christianity in World History.

> conceivable that Christianity today has entered a phase of its history in which it presents itself no longer in the form of a self-contained Corpus Christianum, but in the bifurcated form of a greatly reduced, weakened and divided Church on the one hand, and of a victorious 'secularized' civilization on the other?'[88]

The concept of differentiation can be interpreted in a number of ways, and its effects on religion and religious institutions are various. Differentiation of religion may be seen in a double sense, the first being differentiation within the religious spheres themselves, and the second being the differentiation of the religious from the non-religious elements in the more general system of action[89]. Related to this second meaning is the idea of the 'privatization' of religion. This is an essential part of the concept of differentiation, and it is this meaning which really establishes the relationship between differentiation and secularization. Of this process it has been said that,

> 'In the West religion has increasingly been taken out of the public sector of life and placed in the private sector. At the same time, the development of the global society has tended to reduce the private sector of our existence. At the extreme, religion is no longer considered as anything but a private affair, and the exercise of worship tends to be enclosed within very narrow limits, with the state regulating more or less liberally the public manifestations of the Churches.'[90]

This description is reminiscent of Shiner's definition of this category of secularization theory[91], thus focussing on the link between

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88 ibid., p.16. Some further implications of this 'historical drama' of secularization will be considered in ch.4.

89 Thus Greeley interprets Parsons' view of differentiation, (Religion in the Year 2000, pp.80-5).

90 Mehl, R., op.cit., p.61.

91 Shiner, L., op.cit., p.212.

secularization and differentiation. Although differentiation is an aspect of secularization, it is not to be identified with that total process[92]. There is an essential neutrality of differentiation with regard to secularization. It is possible to trace a process of evolution involving the moving of religious symbols from the 'compact' to the 'differentiated', and similarly the growing differentiation of religious collectivities from other social structures[93]. Neither of these processes, however, necessarily implies secularization in any of the other senses of the term.

The Transposition of Religious Beliefs and Institutions

Shiner calls his fourth category of secularization 'the transposition of religious beliefs and institutions'. Of this, he writes,

> 'Knowledge, patterns of behaviour and institutional arrangements which were once understood as grounded in divine power are transformed into phenomena of purely human creation and responsibility . . . The culmination of this kind of secularization would be a totally anthropologised religion and a society which had taken over all the functions previously accruing to the religious institutions.'[94]

A helpful expansion of this basic definition is provided by Duquoc's statement that secularization,

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92 In Greeley's view, Parsons labels as differentiation what others might more directly refer to as secularization. (op.cit., p.81).

93 cf. Bellah, R.N., 'Religious evolution', American Sociological Review, XXIX (3), 1964, pp.358-74.

94 Shiner, L., op.cit., p.214.

> 'refers to an objective and collective movement which makes man reject any dictates of the Church in his individual and social conduct, or - more radically still - any transcendent norms by which to guide his thought and life . . .'[95]

This aspect of secularization is also very important to Berger[96] and some of the implications of his views will be considered below. This type of secularization has a number of similarities with the concept of differentiation, for as religion ceases to dominate the whole of human life, it follows that certain specialised agencies will arise and concern themselves with the ordering of life in those areas of life which religion has ceased to control.

Moreover, the loss of the religious bases of various aspects of life leads to a crisis of credibility. The transformation of religious institutions from primary to secondary ones thereby tends to create a problem of plausibility for the institutions themselves[97]. It is this crisis of credibility which leads to one of the most readily apparent forms of secularization other than institutional decline.

> 'One of the most obvious ways in which secularization has affected the man in the street is as a 'crisis of credibility' in religion. Put differently, secularization has resulted in a widespread collapse of the plausibility of the traditional religious definitions of reality. This manifestation and secularization on the level of consciousness . . . has its correlate on the social-structural level . . . Subjectively, the man in the street tends to be uncertain about religious matters. Objectively, the man in the street is confronted with a wide variety of religious and other reality-defining

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95 Duquoc, C., editorial comment, Concilium, IX (5), 1969, p.3.

96 This view of secularization has certain close affinities with Berger's basic working definition of secularization as,
> 'the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the dominance of religious institutions and symbols.' (op.cit., p.113).

97 The whole question of this crisis in plausibility is central in Berger's thought, cf. The Social Reality of Religion, esp. pp.131-56.

> agencies that compete for his allegiance or at least attention, and none of which is in a position to coerce him into allegiance . . .'[98]

This statement highlights the relationship between pluralism and the loss of credibility by religious institutions. In this process, such organisations lose their dominance over other, 'secular' institutions, and thus religion is reduced to the level of one among a number of other forms of human associational forms. As has been indicated, this type of secularization is one of which there is probably a more general awareness than certain others, for at one level, it represents the whole popular change of attitude from, for example, looking for a cause such as retribution for human suffering, to the more scientific attitudes of attempting to find the underlying causes of, and thereby remedies for, the suffering. This represents an element of 'rationalisation', a process which has been defined as the,

> 'withholding of emotional participation in thinking about the world.'[99]

In theological terms there are certain parallels between this and the concept of 'man come of age'[100].

The transposition theory also includes the idea of the loss of controls by religion. The idea of social control is immediately suggestive of morality. If it is argued that religion has a control over the moral beliefs and practice of a society, then it follows that

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98 ibid., p.131.
99 O'Dea, T., The Sociology of Religion, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1966, p.81.
100 This is an idea particularly, although not exclusively, associated with Bonhoeffer's prison letters. cf. Bonhoeffer, D., Letters and Papers from Prison, Collins, 1959, esp. pp.122 and 164.

secularization will mean the reduction of such control[101]. It would, however, be too simplistic a view of the situation to see secularization as necessarily leading to a decline in morality[102]. On another level, it can also be argued that religion has a much wider control over society in terms of cultural and other norms. In this case, the effects of secularization will be seen as correspondingly wider.

> 'To the extent that a given society is secular, the direction of dominance no longer flows from religion to the rest of society, but vice versa. To the extent that a given religious body has become the recipient of worldly influences, it may be defined as secular.'[103]

It is instructive to compare this theoretical statement with one commenting on empirical evidence[104].

> 'In Christian countries secularization does not yet mean that Christian outlooks have lost their influence in the population at large, or that Christian faith has become the affair of a small minority.'[105]

On the whole, this view would seem to be less pessimistic for the future role of religion in society.

Despite the view expressed above, many would argue that a major change has overcome Western society in recent years, and would cite as evidence the idea of the 'permissive society', which some would

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101 cf. Little, D., 'Religion, morality and secularization', in Childress, J., and Harned, D., op.cit., pp.135-50.

102 cf. Capps, W.H., 'The meaning of secular, secularism and secularzation', Lutheran World, XVI, 1969, p.269. Capps views the decline in churchly authority as a modification, rather than a complete shift away from such control over life.

103 Goode, E., op.cit., p.269.

104 Freytag, J., and Ozaki, K., Nominal Christianity; Studies of Church and People in Hamburg, Lutterworth, 1970. This was a study undertaken for the commission on world mission and evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

105 ibid., p.122.

proceed to blame on the institutional decline of the Church. Therefore there is, in popular thought, a link between moral 'decline' and secularization[106]. Whilst this view may depend on a rather limited perception of both of these processes, the fact that the link is made is, perhaps, a significant pointer to the former dominant role of the Church in this respect[107].

In this context of the category of 'transposition' may also be considered certain cultural aspects of secularization. Some features of these have already been mentioned[108], and the purpose here is to comment on them in the light of secularization theory. As has already been shown[109], there are problems in regarding secularization as the inevitable product of urbanisation and industrialisation; nevertheless, these changes have been seen as playing an important part in leading to the changes which may be described as 'cultural secularization'[110]. Macintyre saw the urbanisation which accompanied the Industrial Revolution as leading to the destruction of older forms of community, especially those features to which religion had given symbolic expression. The first of these was the loss of the background of a given and unchangeable natural order, providing a framework for the whole social order. Secondly, there was the disappearance of continuity and stability, and thirdly, (and most significant for present purposes), the end of the existence of shared and established

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106 cf. Macintyre, A., op.cit., p.37.

107 A useful comparison here is the relationship between religious and moral education, and the rise of the latter as a separate area of the curriculum. For discussion of this, see ch.11.

108 Ch.1.

109 Ch.1.

110 Macintyre, A., op.cit., Macintyre's argument throughout the whole work is largely concerned with this secularization of the totality of life in certain parts of society.

norms, common to all classes of society[111]. These factors provide the background for Macintyre's approach to secularization and moral change in the twentieth century. He further argued that the loss of any overall social agreement as to the right ways to live is prior to the loss of social control by religion and the end of widespread acceptance of traditional beliefs[112]. This is partially supported by Meland's[113] view of secularization as,

> 'the movement away from traditionally accepted norms and sensibilities in the life habits and interests of a people.'[114]

This is an interesting description of secularization in that it implies no former acceptance of transcendent values or beliefs, and has its emphasis solely on normative change. Thus it would seem that for Meland, the loss of social consensus described by Macintyre would itself constitute the process of secularization, and other changes would be merely secondary.

All these cultural changes belong to the category of 'transposition' not only because of their connections with societal morality, but also because they reflect the ways in which the more general norms of a community have ceased to be seen as grounded in religious ideas, and are more readily open to change. Thus they conform to Shiner's view of transposition. It is noticeable that there has been a lack of recent work in the field of 'cultural secularization'. One reason

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111 ibid., p.12.
112 ibid., pp.52-4.
113 Meland, B.E., The Secularization of Modern Cultures, O.U.P., New York, 1966.
114 ibid., p.3.

for this may be that secularization has progressed to the extent that such works may now be redundant as a statement of the obvious. A more probable reason is that secularization theory itself has undergone a process of specialization, so that there is less place for these more general observations. Some of the works which may be classed as 'cultural secularization' have titles which would appear somewhat anachronistic in the contemporary situation[115].

The Desacralization of the World

This is a complex category, raising a number of major questions which are common to both theological and sociological approaches to secularization, and it will therefore be considered separately in the next chapter. Desacralization would appear to underlie many of the other forms of secularization, and to be reflected in them. It will be argued in ch.3 that there is something very fundamental about desacralization, so that by comparison, other categories may tend to appear as merely symptomatic.

The Movement from a Sacred to a Secular Society

Although Shiner's classification of secularization theories

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115 e.g. Jarrett - Kerr, M., The Secular Promise: Christian Presence amid Contemporary Humanism, S.C.M., 1964. The second half of this title sounds strangely anachronistic in the pluralist society of the 1970's. Similarly, a work which it would be difficult to imagine arising out of contemporary society is that of Eliot. He believed in the necessity of aiming for a Christian society as the only alternative to progressive and insidious adaptation to totalitarian worldliness (Eliot, op.cit., pp.20-1). This Christian society would influence all spheres of life, particularly education and morality, and would depend upon, (but ultimately, logically, also provide) a large degree of unity.

includes six categories, in a later work than that already cited, he reduced the number to five, as the sixth is in many ways a summary of the preceding categories[116].

Shiner states his last category of secularization simply. He describes it as a general concept of social change, the culmination of which would be,

> 'a society in which all decisions are based on rational and utilitarian considerations and there is complete acceptance of change.'[117]

This theory is mainly supported by Becker's view of the evolutionary continuum between sacred and secular societies[118]. The relationship between these two societies in Becker's view has been commented on in the following terms,

> 'Becker defines the sacred society as one that encourages in its members an unwillingness and/or inability to respond to the culturally new, as that is understood by the existing culture. There is present a high degree of resistance to change. Such a society incorporates and sustains an impermeable value system . . . Conversely, the secular society encourages its members to accept willingly, and to respond to, the culturally new. . . . There is, therefore, a high degree of readiness and capacity to change.'[119]

Since this theory is, in many senses, a summary of the others, and the concept of the secular society has already been the subject of some discussion[120], consideration of this theory here will be brief,

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116 Shiner, L., in Childress, J.F., and Harned, D.B., op.cit., pp.510-9.
117 Shiner, L., Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, VI (2) p.216.
118 This view is developed in Becker, H.P., 'Sacred and secular societies', in Through Values to Social Interpretation, Durham, North Carolina, 1950, pp.248-80; and 'Sacred - secular theory', in Becker, H., and Boskoff, A., Modern Sociological Theory, New York, 1957, pp.133-85.
119 Goodridge, R.M., op.cit., p.123.
120 ch.1. The concept will also be considered at a number of other points.

and limited to a few points. The idea of a movement along a continuum from a sacred to a secular society may be challenged on various grounds, but particularly because of the absoluteness of the terms employed. Whilst change is certainly a feature of contemporary society, and there is justification for considering this society to merit the term 'secular', there has probably been openness to change in many previous periods, and yet these are not so classified. Whilst contemporary communications facilitate the reception of the 'culturally new', this does not necessarily imply any less resistance on the part of many people. In contemporary society, change is more prevalent, and may be forced upon people, but they may not be any more 'open' to it than were their ancestors. It may be questioned whether there is any correlation between the amount of change occurring in a given society and the real receptiveness to change in the majority of people of that society. In other words, may there not be a point at which innate resistance to change breaks down under the pressure of a multitude of changes?

The 'rationality' and 'utilitarianism' of which Shiner speaks are features of the secular society to which reference has already been made. They relate closely to the pragmatism which is a further feature of such a society[121]. These and other characteristics (anonymity, tolerance, pluralism, etc) tend to become absolutised by Becker's concept of an inevitable continuum from the sacred to the secular society. Whilst secularization is likely to mean an increase in the importance of these features, it does not necessarily

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121 This Cox sees as important because of the decline in the element of 'mystery'. Secular man is therefore concerned with more pragmatic questions such as 'will it work?' (The Secular City, p.73.)

mean that they will take society over at the cost of previous values.

It seems, therefore, that it is possible to agree with Shiner's omission of this category in his later work, for either it may be seen as a summary of the other categories, in which case it contributes nothing new to secularization theory, or it may be seen as being so general as to be misleading.

CHAPTER 3

THE DESACRALIZATION OF THE WORLD[1]

As has already been indicated, Shiner's fifth category, that of desacralization, has many elements which are common to both sociological and theological approaches to secularization, thus making a rigid distinction between these approaches of little value. Desacralization will therefore be treated separately in this chapter, as it appears to be of major importance for an understanding of secularization.

Of desacralization, Shiner wrote,

> 'the world is gradually deprived of its sacral character as man and nature become the object of rational-causal explanation and manipulation. The culmination of secularization would be a completely 'rational' world society in which the phenomenon of the supernatural or even of 'mystery' would play no part.'[2]

Similar views are to be found in a number of definitions of secularization, and may be exemplified by the following,

> 'Secularization is the process by which naturalistic explanations of the universe increase at the expense of theological and mythological ones.'[3]

This is paralleled by the view that secularization is the process of change from a,

> 'sacral to a secular or hominized universe, involving disenchantment and dedivinization.'[4]

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1 The term 'desacralization' is employed here, but the process is variously described as 'dedivinization', 'desanctification' and 'disenchantment'.

2 Shiner, L., op.cit., pp.215-6.

3 Moberg, D.O., The Church as a Social Institution, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1962, pp.63-4.

4 Davies, J.G., Every Day God, p.126.

Such a statement of 'dedivinization' involves a number of major issues, and this type of secularization therefore demands detailed examination. The first question, as with so many types of secularization, involves the standard with which comparison is being made. What is to be understood by the 'sacral character' of which the world is being deprived? How all-pervading is, or was, it? Is the change represented by the loss of this character of the same order as the types of secularization discussed above, or does it represent a more irreversible trend than, for instance, the category of 'institutional decline'? It would seem that with desacralization one enters a rather different area of discussion, an area which is unable to employ statistics and demographic measurements, and cannot usefully embrace many of the functional theories of sociology, for this category is essentially ideological. This chapter will attempt to discuss some of the origins and implications of the theory of desacralization.

The Sacral Universe

> 'Pre-secular man lives in an enchanted forest. Its glens and groves swarm with spirits. Its rocks and streams are alive with friendly or fiendish demons. Reality is charged with a magical power that erupts here and there to threaten or benefit man. Properly managed and utilized this invisible energy can be supplicated, warded off, or channelled . . ..'[5]

The view of the universe as sacred and mysterious is old. From earliest times man's struggle for survival led him to believe that divine (and demonic) powers penetrated the very fabric of the universe, and thus he developed elaborate rites to placate these powers, though

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5 Cox, H., op.cit., p.5.

clearly, some held these powers to be more potent than others. Gradually, greater sophistication arose, but many long-standing beliefs, emotions and fears remained[6]. At the heart of these emotions stands great feeling of 'more-than-awe' described by Otto as 'mysterium tremendum'[7]. This feeling may be seen as central to the concept of the sacral universe. The sacral universe has been described as,

> 'one in which the functioning of nature and society is explained in terms of the divine . . . man is at the mercy of nature . . . dependent upon it . . . largely unable to control it . . . (man) has to seek divine assistance in order even to live. Nature appears to have almost divine features; it is an epiphany of God himself, and the workings of nature are understood as the workings of God.'[8]

Religious belief is clearly central to such a society, but the place of religious practice is somewhat more problematical, since rituals and ceremonies might be deemed almost superfluous in this setting. However, a threefold function has been claimed for religion in a society holding a belief in the sacral universe. Firstly, religion would act as the protector and preserver of society, insofar as that society ensured that God was given due veneration; secondly, it provided structures of legitimation and explanation, and thirdly, religion and its ritual protected man against a universe which he dominated neither intellectually nor materially[9]. Each of these functions

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6 Although such beliefs originated in primitive society, many of them remained part of popular culture for centuries. In some communities they still live on in traditional folk-tales. cf., for example, many of the tales in Briggs, K.M., and Tongue, R.L., Folktales of England, R.K.P., 1965. Rites and their underlying beliefs are fully discussed by Frazer, J.G., The Golden Bough, Macmillan, 1936.

7 Otto, R., The Idea of the Holy, 1917, E.T., O.U.P., 1923, ch.4. The question of the nature and place of awe will be considered again in section 2 in the discussion of worship.

8 Davies, J.G., op.cit., p.4.

9 ibid., pp.9-11.

is the antithesis of the role of religion in a secular society, and they therefore help to illuminate some of the concepts of secularization discussed above[10].

The concept of 'the Holy'

Any conception of a 'sacral universe' depends upon an idea of 'the holy' permeating that universe. There is usually also an equally strong idea of a polarity between this and the 'profane'.

The idea of the holy has been treated in a variety of ways. The classic modern exposition of this idea was Otto's[11]. He was concerned with the concept specifically in terms of the sacral universe, and his aim was to evoke the holy rather than to conceptualise it. Davies' Every Day God, to which reference has already been made, may be regarded as an attempt at a contemporary reply to Otto. Davies sees the holy not in terms of the numinous, nor in terms of the sacred and profane as antithetical realities[12], but in positive and yet mundane terms[13]. The holy can be found in the most ordinary of everyday experiences, and is not confined to one limited area of human life. Davies' argument rests on three basic points, firstly, that the holy and the secular are not identical, but distinct, despite their essential unity; secondly, that their unity does not violate the integrity of the secular, but allows it to be truly itself; and thirdly, that the holy is not an extra added to human experience, but an integral part of it[14]. There is a

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10 This point will be developed more fully later in the chapter.
11 Otto, R., op.cit.
12 This view of the polarity of, and division between the sacred and the profane will be discussed below.
13 Davies, J.G., op.cit., esp. p.79.
14 ibid., p.90.

clear contrast here between Davies' view of the holy and the view which is willing to identify the holy only in a small number of essentially 'cultural' areas, even within which the possibility of identifying the holy may be strictly limited[15].

Is the holy to be regarded as identical with 'the sacred'? Particularly in discussions of the polarity with 'the profane', the terms 'the holy' and 'the sacred' are often used interchangeably, and they are clearly closely related. However, it has been argued that the distinction between these two terms should be maintained. This view is held by Hartt[16], who has a clearly defined view of the sacred, and yet is prepared to take his quest for the 'holy' far beyond the bounds of 'the sacred'. There remains, nevertheless, a large area of overlap between the two concepts.

Whilst J.G. Davies wished to maintain that the holy may be an integral part of all human experience (though distinct from other elements in this experience), the idea of mystery, traditionally associated with the holy, did not figure largely in his thought. But it may be argued that mystery is still essential to an understanding of the sacred. This close relationship between mystery and the sacred or holy is brought out in the statement that,

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15 cf. Pelikan, J., Human Culture and the Holy, S.C.M., 1959. Pelikan presents a view of a very limited sphere of the holy.

16 Hartt, J.N., 'Secularity and the transcendence of God', in Childress, J.F., and Harned, D.B., op.cit., pp.151-73.

> 'the sacred . . . is the area of mystery . . . . mystery in the sense of a presence in man's experience of a darkness he knows to be light but cannot see, of an intelligibility too bright for his gaze, of a transcendence that evokes his adoration.'[17]

It may be the case that, as with the holy, the locus of mystery has changed, and that other areas of life may still have the capacity to evoke such a response, though, as has already been shown, mystery may be replaced by the pragmatism of the secular city[18].

The Sacred and the Profane.

Central to much thought on secularization, but particularly to the idea of desacralization, is the concept of a pair of opposing realities, kept in some kind of tension and balance, the sacred and the profane. The classic exponent of this view was Durkheim[19], who saw this radical division into two opposing realms existing throughout the whole history of human thought, and as a characteristic of all religious approaches to life.

> 'This division of the world into two domains, the one containing all that is sacred, the other all that is profane, is the distinctive trait of religious thought . . . . . In all the history of human thought, there exists no other example of two categories of things so profoundly differentiated or so radically opposed to one another. The traditional opposition between good and bad is nothing beside this, for the good and the bad are only opposed species of the same class, namely morals . . . . The two worlds are not only conceived of as separate, but even as hostile and jealous rivals of each other.'[20]

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17 Davis, C., op.cit., p.37. There are certain similarities between this statement and the central ideas of the concept of awe. (cf. section 2).

18 cf. the last part of ch.2.

19 Durkheim, E., The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, Allen and Unwin, 1915.

20 ibid., pp.37-8 (1954 edition).

The sacred and the profane are frequently referred to in this way as two distinct realms or spheres, and in the traditional view, a major function of worship was to form a bridge between the two spheres[21]. The extent to which the spheres are polarised, or whether they should be seen as more closely related, is a matter over which there is disagreement. It may be argued that the two are essentially and utterly distinct,

> 'The distinction between the sacred and the secular is beyond question. There is an area of man's life that is necessarily withdrawn (though not isolated) from his temporal concerns . . .'[22]

Such a view is opposed by Davies' stress on the essential unity of the sacred and the secular, and his argument that although they are distinct, they may be found in the same areas of life[23]. A third position, and one of which more will be said below, is that the two realms remain essentially separate, but it is only in the Christian context that they emerge both in their distinctness and their mutual correlation[24].

It is against the background of the concepts considered above that the desacralization theory must be seen. It is the movement away from a very deeply rooted view of the world, and, as such, desacralization is a complex, rather than a single process.

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21 cf. Davies, J.G., op.cit., p.251. This will be discussed further in ch.6.

22 Clarke, T., 'The world is already Christic', America, May 29th, 1965, p.802, cited in O'Hanlon, D., 'The secularity of Christian worship', in Taylor, M.J., (ed), The Sacred and the Secular, Prentice-Hall, 1968, p.219.

23 Davies, J.G., op.cit., p.79, inter alia.

24 For an exposition of this view, cf. Micklem, P.A., The Sacred and the Secular, Hodder and Stoughton, 1948, p.32.

The Origins of Desacralization

The suggestion is frequently made that secularization is essentially a modern phenomenon. However, it has already been argued in the case of other categories of secularization (e.g. the decline theory) that such a view can be misleading, for the process may be seen to have its origins at least as early as the last century, and often still earlier. With the category of desacralization, this argument can be made even more strongly, and the origins of this form of secularization may be seen in the Old Testament.

In contrast to the religion of the Old Testament, the other religions of the Ancient Near East appear, despite their differences, to have the common element of being essentially 'cosmological', and remaining, in many ways, a form of high magic[25]. This outlook posits a continuity between the world of men and the gods, which has been seen as being exemplified in the myth/ritual pattern of Ancient Near Eastern religion, by which the breaking of the natural order was rectified by the appropriate ritual acts[26].

The O.T., on the other hand, asserts a full repudiation of these systems.

> 'Whereas in the 'primary' religions 'the world' is a mythical concept, . . . the Bible at once, from the very first verse of the book of Genesis, sets the world in the dimension of time and history.'[27]

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25 This is not to say that there were not magical elements in early Yahwism. These however, were subsidiary parts of the religion, especially as compared with the overtly magical emphasis of Baalism which was, of course, essentially a fertility cult.

26 cf. Berger, P.L., op.cit., p.119.

27 van Leeuwen, A.T., op.cit., p.331.

In the O.T., creation itself may be seen as one form of 'disenchantment', and, in both the Jahwistic and Priestly accounts of creation, divinity is ascribed solely to Yahweh. It is clear that in the O.T. traditions, Yahweh stands outside the cosmos, and is mobile, unlike the gods of the surrounding nations[28]. Not being fixed to one particular nation, he was able to choose his people.

It is in this setting that the O.T.'s unique emphasis on history arises. The significance of this has been well-demonstrated by van Leeuwen, who wrote,

> 'Here a break is made with the everlasting cycle of nature and the timeless presentness of myth. Here history is discovered, where the covenant between creator and creation, between the Lord and his people, bursts open the solid oneness of the universe. Here there is proper room for man, and here the taste of freedom. The world is now radically secularized, becomes creation moving forward to regeneration, is made the arena of history, is in much pain and travail, waiting for the consummation and redemption of all things.'[29]

This historical emphasis of the O.T. finds expression in many ways. The kinship ties of the people are to their ancestors, and not to nature. The importance of history in the lives of the people may be evidenced from the amount that survived in oral tradition. Most important, however, is the way in which the world, bereft of magical forces, became the historical arena of divine activity. The Heils-geschichte pattern which is seen so clearly in the O.T. finds its best expression in motifs such as that of the Exodus deliverance. In the Old Testament,

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28 Berger, P.L., op.cit., p.121.
29 Van Leeuwen, A.T., op.cit., p.331.

> 'History acquires a value which it did not possess in the religions of ancient civilizations . . . it never occurred to them to identify the nerve of the historical process as the purposeful activity of God or to integrate the whole by subordinating it to a single great religious conception. Their view of the divine activity was too firmly imprisoned in the thought forms of their nature mythology.'[30]

One of the clearest examples of the historical grounding of Israel's faith is to be found in the great cultic recital of Deuteronomy[31].

Whilst the O.T., and especially the theology of Creation, and the development of Heilsgeschichte are usually seen as the Biblical roots of 'desacralization', the idea can also be traced in the New Testament. Shiner[32] cites Gal.4:1ff as evidence of the idea of sonship through Christ, in which man is freed from the στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου . It is difficult to place too much emphasis on this passage, because of the problems in the interpretation of the term στοιχεῖα [33]. The same theme is taken up by Newbigin[34], who sees this clearly in terms of desacralization.

> 'In the Bible this desacralizing is attributed to what God has done in Jesus Christ. According to St. Paul, God has, in Christ, dethroned the cosmic powers and liberated man from their control so that he can enjoy,

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30 Eichrodt, W., Theology of the Old Testament, vol.1, S.C.M., 1961, p.41.

31 Deut. 26:5-9.

32 Shiner, L., op.cit., p.216.

33 The meaning of στοιχεῖα here and in Col.2 is much disputed. It may refer to the elements of learning, and thus of religion, or to the 'elemental spirits' of the earth. It seems to have had a more specific meaning within the realms of ancient philosophy. (cf. Lohse, E., Colossians and Philemon, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1971, pp.96-8). More difficult to accept is Shiner's use of the Τὰ Καίσαρος ἀπόδοτε Καίσαρι, καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ. saying as an example of secularization through the separation of religion and politics.

34 Newbigin, L., Honest Religion for Secular Man, S.C.M., 1966.

through Christ, the freedom and responsibility of sonship.'[35]

The use of the example of Gal.4:1-4 has introduced the Christological dimension of desacralization. This dimension however, is by no means limited to the concept of freedom from the στοιχεῖα. The desacralization theory of secularization, as has been indicated above, includes not only the 'disenchantment' of nature, but also the breaking down of the traditional concepts of the dual spheres of the sacred and the profane. There are also strong Christological elements here, and the view of the role of Christ in this context has been developed by Bonhoeffer[36], who described the traditional, dualistic view of the two spheres, juxtaposed and conflicting[37], and then discussed man's inevitable resultant dilemma. This is brought about because he is no longer able to see reality as a whole, and is therefore forced to seek <u>either</u> Christ <u>or</u> the world[38]. But Bonhoeffer asserts,

> 'One is denying the revelation of God in Jesus Christ if one tries to be 'Christian' without seeing and recognising the world in Christ. There are, therefore, not two spheres, but only the one sphere of the realisation of Christ, in which the reality of God and the reality of the world are united. Thus the theme of the two spheres . . . is foreign to the

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35 ibid., p.33. He continues by relating this freedom to the idea of man's technological mastery,

> '. . This way of speaking has no meaning at all for the majority of those who now exercise the freedom of dealing with a desacralized nature by the methods of modern science and technology. The desacralizing process lies buried so deep in the history of modern civilization that the ghosts of the old powers no longer trouble them. . '

36 Bonhoeffer, D., <u>Ethics</u>, S.C.M., 1949. References here will be to the 1964 edition (Fontana).

37 He described them as,

> 'the one divine, holy, supernatural and Christian, and the other wordly, profane, natural and unChristian.' (ibid., p.196).

38 ibid., p.197.

> New Testament. There are not two spheres, standing side by side, competing with each other and attacking each other's frontiers . . . The whole reality of the world is already drawn into Christ, and bound together in him, and the movement of history consists solely in divergence and convergence in relation to the centre.'[39]

Implicit in this breaking down of the barriers between the sacred and the secular is the subsequent denial of the specifically sacred or secular in life. Thus Brunner[40] stated,

> 'All religion creates a gulf between the sacred and the secular; it is religion in contrast to the secular. In Jesus this contrast is explicitly denied; nothing is secular, all is sacred, for all belongs to God. Jesus rejects holy seasons, holy persons, holy places specially holy acts, and indeed too, the holy gods .. ..'[41]

Desacralization in the contemporary situation

If desacralization is to be seen as rooted in both the O.T. view of history and of creation, as well as being carried further in the work of Christ, in what sense may it be regarded as part of the contemporary process of secularization? Although it has roots far back in the history of Christian thought, it would seem to be manifest in the contemporary situation in three major ways.

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39 ibid., p.197-8.

40 Brunner, E., Revelation and Reason: The Christian Doctrine of Faith and Knowledge, S.C.M., 1947.

41 ibid., p.258. (This links up with the themes of both 'religionless Christianity' which will be considered in the next chapter, and of worship, which will be discussed in section 2).

The first evidence of desacralization is in the process of rationalisation[42], with its use of technical rather than magical or mysterious means of controlling the universe. In this process, man becomes,

> 'independent of religion, and (lives) by reason face to face with objectified, physical nature.'[43]

Thus, by this process, the world becomes depersonalised and reified[44]. There are, therefore, close links here with the features of man's 'technological mastery' of the world discussed earlier[45]. Secular man's technological skill, enabling him to control, manipulate or destroy many aspects of his world, inevitably tends to mean that vital elements of mystery, the components of reverence and wonder, are likely to decline.

Perhaps paradoxically, the second contemporary aspect of this form of secularization would appear, at first sight, to be the antithesis of the above. It is the increasing awareness that, despite man's technological knowledge and skill, he is not the complete master of nature, and that the resources of the world are finite. With this goes a recognition of limitations to growth in many fields of industry and technology. Yet this revaluation of nature may be seen as an

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42 cf. Weber's views on rationalisation. He writes,
'. . there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, . . one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is disenchanted. One need no longer have recourse to magical means in order to master or implore the spirits . . Technical means and calculations perform the service . .' (Gerth, H.H. and Mills, C.W. op.cit., p.139.)

43 Kahler, E., Man the Measure, New York, Pantheon, 1943, quoted in Shiner, L., op.cit., p.216.

44 cf. O'Dea, T., op.cit., pp.85-6.

45 ch.1.

integral part of desacralization because it still emphasises that nature is not a mystical force but is in man's control[46]. Thus, in this aspect, nature is still objectified and depersonalised, and differs from the manifestation of desacralization discussed above only in the value put on nature.

Both of the aspects discussed above have been concerned with nature. The third is concerned with the traditional ways of thinking of the sacred and the profane, and in particular, the whole concept of the holy. This will be considered fully in section 2, where it will be argued that contemporary trends in worship appear to support the breaking down of the traditional 'spheres' of the sacred and the profane.

In discussion of desacralization, there is a tendency to imply the existence of uniform movements of thought. This, however, is clearly not the case. The 'threshold of wonder' will vary greatly, not just between persons of different educational backgrounds, but also between different personality types and age groups. Moreover, it has been argued[47] that the loss of a 'bewitched' quality of the world will vary considerably, depending on the original nature of this quality for the individual concerned. The argument continues that if one's religion centres around a belief in sprites and leprechauns, then the effects of disenchantment will be more drastic than in the absence of such a belief[48]. Other forms of religious background may also make

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46 Derr, T.S , op.cit., pp.11-2.
47 Schneider, L., The Sociological Approach to Religion, Wiley, New York, 1969.
48 ibid., p.176.

a significant difference to the level of disenchantment. Thus it has been argued that Protestants have had to face disenchantment in a way never experienced by Catholics. This is partly due to the Protestant simplifying and 'demythologising' of religion.

> 'Protestantism may be described in terms of an immense shrinkage in the scope of the sacred in reality . . The sacramental apparatus is reduced to a minimum, and even there, divested of its more numinous qualities. The miracle of the mass disappears altogether. Less routine miracles, if not denied altogether, lose all real significance for the religious life .. It can be said that Protestantism divested itself as much as possible from the three most ancient and most powerful concomitants of the sacred - mystery, miracle and magic. This process has been aptly caught in the phrase 'disenchantment of the world.'[49]

Conclusions

It can be seen that the concept of desacralization is much wider and more far-reaching than the preceding sociological categories of secularization. It is only loosely connected with institutional religion, and yet has profound implications for it (e.g. in concepts and practices of worship.) Whilst each of Shiner's categories tends to have some relationship to one or more of the others, the desacralization theory seems to relate to all of them[50]. It represents an underlying change in thinking which is likely to be reflected in the change in practice represented by some of the other categories. It is not possible to attempt to establish the priority of this theory to the

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49 Berger, P.L., op.cit., p.117.

50 A decline in belief in the 'sacred' is likely to mean a decline in belief in sacred times places and persons, and thus in institutional religion. (There is not a necessary correlation between these beliefs, however, belief in the sacred need not necessarily imply belief in sacred times, places and persons.) Similarly, a breaking down of the barriers between the sacred and the profane, is likely to involve some process of 'conformity with this world'.

others, and it is likely that they may occur simultaneously. It seems however, that there is a more fundamental quality about this category of secularization, compared with which some of the others, such as the decline theory, may appear to be merely symptomatic.

CHAPTER 4

THEOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO SECULARIZATION

Introduction

It was argued at the beginning of this section that there are not specifically sociological or theological types of secularization, so much as sociological and theological approaches to, or understandings of the process. The overlap of the two disciplines has already been demonstrated, especially in the case of desacralization. Thus, in proceeding to a consideration of theological approaches to secularization, there will inevitably be certain common ground between these and the sociological ideas discussed above. The theological approaches to secularization are essentially different from the sociological. On the whole, the stance of sociology towards secularization is neutral; it is an aspect of modern life that may be described and analysed. Theology, however, tends either to take a rather negative view of the whole process, with ready condemnation, or, conversely, it welcomes it as part of the inevitable development of Christianity. Neutrality is rare.

There is no scheme which can readily be applied to the theological descriptions of secularization, as there is with the sociological aspects, but it is possible to take a number of key concepts, or areas of change, and to employ these as a framework for discussion. The categories which will therefore be used are:-

a) secularization as a historical drama,
b) the problems of speaking of God in a secular age,
c) the idea of 'man come of age',
d) concepts of the world,
e) concepts of the Church,
f) 'religionless Christianity'.

As has been shown, none of Shiner's categories of secularization is self-sufficient, nor is it independent of other theories. Each is separate and distinct to the extent that some are prepared to see it as the predominant meaning of the term 'secularization'. The theological approaches however, are not alternative or complementary theories of the process. Rather, they are key concepts or areas of development in theological thought which, taken together, may be said to comprise a picture of the trends described as secularization, but it would be difficult to take any one of these separately and so describe it.

This chapter will therefore attempt to do the same as was done in the preceding two chapters, that is, to introduce some of the main themes and areas of secularization. However, this is done here with full awareness of the major problems of this method for the theological approach, for whereas sociology lends itself to this form of examination, theology does not. Therefore, all that will be undertaken here is a brief discussion of some of the theological issues which seem to have some bearing on secularization, and not a comprehensive introduction to these questions.

Secularization as a historical drama

Secularization is a continuing process; it is not a once-for-all event. This means that it must bear the marks of such an on-going movement. It has been described as,

> 'basically a drama of Christendom, which has its promising development, its crisis, and its tragic conclusion.'[1]

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1 West, C., Bossey Ecumenical Institute, Consultation on the Meaning of the Secular, 1959, p.6.

It is possible to see secularization as a historical drama in three main ways. Firstly, it may be so viewed in that it is part of the whole historical process of Christianity, and, as such, inextricably linked with the history of Christianity[2]. Thus, secularization may be regarded as the inevitable outcome of that history. This is the argument of van Leeuwen, who writes,

> 'Is not the process of emancipation from religious constraints, which is usually referred to as 'secularization', itself a product of Western Christian civilization, and has it not been set in motion by forces nurtured in the course of Christian history? Are not all the 'non-religious' elements of Western civilization - modern technology, science, democracy, capitalism, socialism, nationalism which have thrust their way into non-Western countries and been welcomed there, among the fruits of that very civilization which was formed and driven forward by the dynamic spirit of Christianity?.... Is it not conceivable that Christianity today has entered a phase of its history in which it presents itself no longer in the form of a self-contained corpus Christianum, but in the bifurcated form of a greatly reduced, weakened and divided Church on the one hand, and of a victorious 'secularized' civilization on the other?'[3]

Such an argument is related to Berger's view, discussed earlier, that secularization is an inevitable product of Protestantism. van Leeuwen, however, is taking this argument one stage further, to the history of Christianity itself. Such arguments are basically concerned with the history of the Church, and are necessarily dependent on many generalisations. It is also possible to claim a Christological basis for secularization, by taking the Incarnation as a fundamental and radical form of secularization[4], for it represents the 'secularization', in a

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2 cf. van Leeuwen, A.T., op.cit., p.332.
3 ibid., p.16.
4 On this view, cf. Dantine, W., 'The revelation of man', Student World, XVI (1), 1963, pp.29-30.

literal sense, of God. By the incarnation, God became 'worldly', and 'conformed' to this world in the very real sense of taking a human form. Moreover, by the Incarnation, the dualistic distinction between sacred and secular was broken, and the two thence united[5]. In these senses, it may be argued, some degree of secularization is built into the very basis of Christianity, and it is therefore to be expected that as the history of Christianity progressed, so this secularization would become increasingly evident. Thus, secularization may be regarded as a product of Christianity and,

> 'may be an authentic manifestation in a changing world of the purpose of God in history. The God of the Bible and the Christian faith is a God committed to history, and to live in history is to live in change . . . The present phase in historical evolution may be a new stage in the povidential order; we must learn to see and obey the will of God in it, uninhibited by a faithless nostalgia for a Christendom that is gone . .'[6]

The second way in which secularization may be seen as a historical drama is in terms of the Christian emphasis on history. The heilsgeschichte elements in the history and theology of the O.T. have already been mentioned[7], and this was a feature distinguishing Hebrew religion from that of other Ancient Near Eastern peoples. The name most readily associated with this 'historical' approach to secularization is that of R. Gregor Smith[8]. Whilst he remained critical of much that is seen as 'heilsgeschichte', this is largely because the concept rests rather heavily upon an idea of 'the holy' as separate and distinct[9]. Smith

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5 This aspect of secularization was discussed in ch.3. (cf. Bonhoeffer, D., Ethics, pp.197-8.)
6 Barry, F.R., op.cit., pp.57-8.
7 ch.3.
8 Smith, R.G., Secular Christianity, Collins, 1966.
9 ibid., pp.110-11.

nevertheless retains a view of history that may be described as 'geschichte', or the continuing presentness of the past. Despite the fact that he refers to 'secularism' rather than to 'secularization', and the former, as has already been demonstrated[10], bears a rather more absolute meaning than the open process implied by the latter, Smith's comments are still helpful in the present discussion. He writes,

> ' . . . the source of secularism is to be found in the Christian faith. Further, the relation of secularism to this faith is of such a kind that it cannot be noted simply as a historical fact of a merely genetical order. The relation continues into our time . . . .'[11]

In addition to Smith's particular emphasis on 'geschichte', there is also the more general historical emphasis of Christianity. This can be identified not only in the awareness of the heritage of Hebrew religion, but also, and more especially, at the centre of the Christian faith in the historical Christ-event[12]. Thus, for any religion which is concerned with events occurring within the ordinary course of history, secularization will to some extent be a natural process, for worth and value have already been accorded to the worldly, inasmuch as this is the locus of divine activity. It may be argued therefore, that in a religion so clearly rooted in the historical manifestation of God within the secular world, that secularization is, all the more, a natural process.

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10 ch.1.
11 Smith, R.G., op.cit., p.150.
12 Whether this historical dimension is seen as limited to the Incarnation and Atonement, or is seen more generally in the fact of the life of Christ, the emphasis remains much the same.

A third feature of secularization which may be classified under the heading of 'historical drama' is the process of liberation. This has already been hinted at in van Leeuwen's statement cited earlier, and secularization has been defined by West as,

> 'the withdrawal of areas of life from religious and finally also from metaphysical control, and the attempt to understand and live in these areas in the terms which they alone can offer.'[13]

Although this strictly implies the liberation of society from some of the traditional controls and constraints of religion, more general forms of liberation are likely to be consequent upon the liberation from religious constraints. Once the concept of freedom is accepted, it is difficult to limit it to specific areas of life. The Old Testament emphasis on Yahweh's activity in history meant not only that his action occurred in time, but also that it was operative within the ordinary social and political life of the people. If this is regarded as a continuing process or as 'geschichte' history, then the contemporary political and 'secular' world will become the arena of God's liberating and renewing activity. Thus the current attempts to evolve various 'theologies of liberation'[14], may be seen as part of

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13 West, C., op.cit., p.1. cf. van Peursen, C.A., Bossey Consultation on the Meaning of the Secular, pp.1-5.

14 The works in this area are now numerous, and are concerned with liberation from oppressive political ideologies, from colonialism, racism and sexism. A few examples of the literature are, Kee, A., (ed Seeds of Liberation, S.C.M., 1973; Alves, R.A., 'Theology and the liberation of man', in In Search of a Theology of Development, Sodepax Report, Committee on Society, Development and Peace, Geneva, 1969, pp.75-92; Morton, N., 'Toward a whole theology', Risk, X (2), 1974, pp.14-16; Bonino, J.M., Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age, S.P.C.K., 1975. The involvement of the Churches with the theme of liberation is reflected in its importance in two of the sections ('Education for liberation and community' and 'structures of injustice and struggles for liberation') of the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches. (cf. W.C.C., Work Book for the fifth assembly of the W.C.C., Geneva, 1975, pp.40-61.)

this process. Furthermore, the concern of the Churches with liberation movements of various types may be indicative of a major loss of dominance by the Churches themselves, for such a concern with the various 'oppressed' groups would have been unlikely at a time when many were held in bondage by the dominance of the Church[15]. There is also the more general interpretation of secularization as liberation[16]. This has connections both with the sociological theory of differentiation and of the differentiation of society from religion, for both of these theories really involve the loss of dominance by religious institutions, and the increasing independence of the 'liberated' area of life[17].

These various elements within the concept of a historical drama are brought together in Thomas'[18] statement that secularization has been seen,

> 'as the decisive fact of our time which challenges and threatens every world view. (They) also see secularization as the fruit of the Christian gospel. It is something to be welcomed, since it liberates man from all types of religous and metaphysical bondage, from the supremacy of fate, from the tyranny of cosmic powers, from the divinity of kings and from the strictures of unquestioned ideologies.'[19]

The process involved is not without its problems. The first is the question as to whether the whole historical process of secularization in fact represents liberation or dehumanization[20]. There is the possibility of dehumanization because of secularization's potential

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15 The argument that traditional Christianity has held mankind in bondage is forcibly stated by Kahl, J., The Misery of Christianity, Penguin, 1971.

16 Thus secularization has been defined as the,
'liberation of mankind from the grip of obscurantism' (Panikkar, R. 'Secularization and worship', Studia Liturgica, VII (2-3), 1970, p.33.

17 cf. ch.2.

18 Thomas, O.C., (ed), Attitudes toward other Religions, S.C.M., 1969.

19 ibid., p.27.

20 Adler, E., 'Secularization', Student World, XVI (1), 1963, pp.1-3.

for removing some of the dimensions of variety, depth and understanding in human life[21]. Such a criticism, although valid, may tend to rest on a rather limited and negative definition of secularization.

The second problem arises from the very description of secularization as historical drama, for, it is argued[22], by so doing, what is really being said is that secularization is totally irreversible. The validity of this as a criticism must inevitably rest both on the definition of secularization that is adopted[23], and on the view of history that is taken. If history is viewed as following a straight-line continuum, then, clearly, any process described as a 'historical drama' is likely to be seen as irreversible. If, however, a view of history as following a more 'cyclical'[24] pattern is accepted, then the problem of irreversibility will not be so great.

Some links between the concept of secularization as a historical drama and Shiner's categories of secularization have already been mentioned. These are the parallels between the liberation aspects of historical drama, and the differentiation and disengagement theories. There is also an evident connection with Shiner's sixth type of secularization - the movement from a sacred to a secular society. It has been claimed by van Leeuwen that the concept of conformity with this

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21 The latter view is supported by Smith's comment that,
'in its superficial aspects the tide of secularism is tending to reduce everything to the same boring mediocrity and conformism, to one style and taste, to a life which basically does not emerge from the impersonal world of It . . .' (Smith, R.G., Secular Christianity, Collins, 1966, p.139).

22 van Leeuwen, A.T., op.cit., p.333.

23 The decline of religion, for example, is potentially more reversible than the process of differentiation.

24 e.g., the view of Toynbee (Civilization on Trial, O.U.P., 1948).

world should be seen as the very opposite of the historical drama of secularization. He considers it strange that these two processes of secularization are simultaneously at work within the history of Christianity[25]. It is, however, difficult to accept van Leeuwen's polarisation of these two aspects of secularization, for it would seem that, although distinct, they may be regarded as complementary aspects of the process.

The problems of speaking of God in a secular age

The discussion of secularization as a historical drama was largely concerned with the nature of the process of secularization. The categories which follow will mainly be concerned with the content or characteristics of that process. Firstly, there is the problem of speaking of God in a secular age, in many ways fundamental to other questions involved in secularization. This demands consideration on two levels, the terms in which such discourse may occur in a secular age, and, more radically, whether talk of God is possible at all any longer. The whole issue is one of the key problems of secularization, for it is concerned with the attempt to represent what many have held to be the timeless in terms of contemporary secular culture. This thereby involves not only language about God, but also the whole quest for valid symbols by which belief may be expressed[26]. Whether the crisis in 'meaningfulness' is prior to other forms of secularization

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25 van Leeuwen, A.T., op.cit., p.332.

26 The latter problem has particular pertinence for worship, and a fuller discussion of the search for valid symbols will be found in ch.8.

(for example, institutional decline), or symptomatic of them, is impossible to determine with any accuracy. It is more likely, however, that these are complementary processes, so that, for instance, problems of credibility are increased by institutional decline, which, in turn, may be partly due to a growing sense of the meaninglessness of many traditional religious statements.

The first question, that of how to speak of God in a secular age, may be said to arise out of, and reflect, the movement from a sacral to a secular universe, for the conceptions of God (and of man) which arose in a sacralised culture, will inevitably need re-interpretation once that culture is secularised and the original conceptual framework removed[27]. The basic problem as presented to theology today centres round Bonhoeffer's question in his letter of 30th April, 1944.

> 'How do we speak of God without religion, i.e. without the temporally influenced presuppositions of metaphysics, inwardness and so on? How do we speak (but perhaps we are no longer capable of speaking of such things as we used to) in a secular fashion of God?'[28]

Bonhoeffer's question reflects the whole problem, for it arises out of an awareness that traditional religious symbols, terminology and conceptual structures lose their potency in a secular world, and thus there arises the attempt to express the same underlying ideas without the use of specifically religious language. Here Bethge[29] provides a

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27 cf. van Caster, M., 'Secularization: a Christian view', Lumen Vitae, XXIII (4), 1968, pp.626-7. He contrasts the position of man in these different cultures, and thus considers man's needs at the various levels involved.

28 Bonhoeffer, D., Letters and Papers from Prison, p.92.

29 Bethge, E., 'The challenge of Bonhoeffer's life and theology', in Smith, R.G., World Come of Age, Collins, 1967, pp.22-88.

reminder of an important distinction between Bonhoeffer and others who have sought such a non-religious interpretation. For Bonhoeffer, this attempt at reinterpretation does not arise out of doubts but out of the conviction of the adulthood of the world[30]. The reconstruction demanded is necessarily difficult, and further impeded by the fact that Bonhoeffer did not survive to provide the answer to his own question[31]. It may be helpful to trace some of the inherent problems through the attempt of one writer to find such a non-religious interpretation. Paul van Buren is here taken as an example. Whilst he is by no means typical as a theologian in this field, the method adopted and the conclusions reached seem to typify some of the problems involved in the attempt to speak of God in a secular age.

Van Buren's most influential work is probably The Secular Meaning of the Gospel[32]. Although some of the implications of this book have resulted in van Buren being classed with the 'death of God' theologians, it would seem that he should not be identified with that school, despite the fact that he shares some of its premises[33]. The fundamental question to which van Buren addresses himself is,

> 'How many a Christian who is himself a secular man understand the Gospel in a secular way?'[34]

Following the method of linguistic analysis, and focussing especially

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30 ibid., p.81.

31 Bonhoeffer's own solution was essentially a personal one, that of the following of an 'Arkansdisciplin' or 'discipline of secrecy', this has been taken to mean a reluctance to use certain forms of language and religious practices. (Nicholls, W., Systematic and Philosophical Theology, Penguin, 1969, pp.221-3.)

32 van Buren, P., The Secular Meaning of the Gospel, S.C.M., 1963.

33 cf. Nicholls, W., op.cit., p.326.

34 van Buren, P., op.cit., p.xiv.

on questions of the understanding of the Gospel, he reaches the conclusion that Christianity,

> 'is fundamentally about man, that its language about God is one way, a dated way, among a number of ways, of saying what it is Christianity wants to say about man and human life and human history.'[35]

The fact that van Buren does not fully clarify his position with regard to the question of God, and spends the latter half of his book discussing Jesus as 'the free man who set other men free'[36], is indicative of the persistence of the problem of discussion of the divine. Thus, for van Buren, God becomes a

> 'symbol for the absoluteness of the Christian's commitment to a new perspective on the world, drawn from his vision of Christ.'[37]

This is based on the Gospel, which,

> 'claims that in the history of Jesus of Nazareth something universal, eternal, absolute, something it calls 'God' was manifested.'[38]

Some of the problems of such an approach are already evident. It is not clear whether the use of the sort of philosophy van Buren favours necessarily leads to dispensing with talk about God, or merely to a reduction in the 'content' of the term. Whichever of these may be the implication, both highlight the problem of this kind of attempt at 'translation' into secular terminology, for once the traditional

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35 Comment of van Buren in Mehta, V., The New Theologian, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965, p.55.
36 van Buren, P., op.cit., p.138.
37 Nicholls, W., op.cit., p.326.
38 van Buren, P., op.cit., p.139.

conceptual framework is dispensed with, then few guidelines for such translation remain. This links closely with a second problem, for the activity may not be one of translation, but of negation. Thus,

> 'what began apparently as a fresh analysis of the Christian faith rapidly turns into fresh proposals for its content.'[39]

van Buren's aim, an aim shared by many, was to understand and interpret the Gospel in secular terms, and thus, by attempting to overcome some of the problems of speaking of God in a secular age, the concern becomes one of 'secularising theology'. But van Buren has also been criticised for having no 'theology of the secular'[40], and this criticism would appear to be valid, especially in view of the importance (discussed earlier[41]) of maintaining the integrity and identity of the the secular. Whilst it might be argued that theology as such is redundant in this context, it seems that there would at least be value in some more thorough definition of 'the secular'. In the absence of this, the danger of negation, mentioned above, is all the more real. Such an approach contrasts sharply with Bonhoeffer's position in that, despite his 'etsi deus non daretur'[42], his letters never hinted at such negation.

Having discussed some of the questions involved in the various attempts to speak of God in a secular age, the second alternative must now be considered. This is a matter of 'content' rather than of 'translation'. It is not a question of the feasibility of translating the ideas of religion into terms which 'secular man' can understand,

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39 Nicholls, W., op.cit., p.325. Such fresh proposals for the content are probably most clearly seen in van Buren's treatment of the Easter event (cf. van Buren, pp.126-34).

40 Mascall, E., The Secularization of Christianity, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1968, p.44.

41 ch.3.

42 This will be discussed more fully below.

but of whether these concepts in themselves have any meaning in the contemporary situation. This question is fundamental to the concept of secularization, viewed as the problem of meaning in the absence of the supernatural[43]. Although this may be seen as lying at the heart of the whole secularization issue, there is little agreement on the nature of the 'absence'[44].

The whole question of meaning and of the validity of traditional religious concepts is epitomised in the slogan 'the death of God'[45]. Whilst the theological movement to which this refers is not, in itself, to be regarded as a major feature of the theological side of secularization, it is symptomatic of the whole 'secularizing' tendency within theology, with the concomitant loss of certainties and movement away from well-defined belief. Thus, although the movement is of limited importance, the tensions which it reflected and the attempt it was making to come to terms with the contemporary are significant for an understanding of secularization.

The central issue is that of the viability of belief in God in a society in which the term no longer appears to have meaning. Although, as has been argued, Bonhoeffer's work was not one of negation,

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43 Such a view of secularization is illustrated by Pratt, V., op.cit.

44 For some, God is totally absent, for others, various forms of belief in God or the supernatural are absent. The implications of this will be discussed later in this chapter.

45 The first announcement of the 'death of God' is usually said to have been made by Nietzsche's madman, shouting desperately,

> 'Where has God gone? . . We have slain him, you and I. We are all his murderers . . Do we not hear the noise of the grave-diggers, as they bury God? . . . God is dead, God stays dead. What are the Churches, if not the tombs and sepulchres of God?'

(Nietzsche, F., 'Die Frochliche Wissenschaft', English Translation by Common, T., The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Vol.X, 1910, pp.275-6.)

nor in any way of the same tradition as the 'death of God' school, he shares the same essential concern,

> 'God as a working hypothesis in morals, politics or science, has been surmounted and abolished; and the same thing has happened in religion . . . . And we cannot be honest, unless we recognise that we have to live in the world etsi deus non daretur.'[46]

That Bonhoeffer differs profoundly from many others who were to write in the same vein is demonstrated by the way in which he goes on to argue in the same letter that man must recognise 'before God' that he has to live 'etsi deus non daretur'. His argument must also be seen against the background of his concept of 'man come of age'[47], and it may be said that he is calling for a more mature concept of God to accompany man's maturity in many fields of life[48].

Whilst Bonhoeffer's position was one of arguing against over-dependence on a traditional form of belief in God, others, including those of the 'death of God' school, have gone further in arguing that belief in God is no longer a necessary central element in Christianity. This is based largely on the difficulty of such belief which,

> 'hitherto has been supposed to be the central element in Christianity. . . . The one thing which cannot be debated <u>within</u> the Church is the existence of God . . The debate about God is, strictly speaking, still not a debate about the existence of God. Those who contribute to the debate are not willing to take this responsibility

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46 Bonhoeffer, D., <u>Letters and Papers from Prison</u>, revised edition S.C.M., 1967, pp.195-6.

47 This concept will be discussed later in this chapter.

48 An example of this 'maturity' is the lack of expectation of divine miraculous intervention in times of crisis. cf. von Caster, M., op.cit., p.616.

> seriously within the Church. It is assumed that the debate takes place only between the Church and those outside.
>
> Yet this is part of the situation in which we live. Belief in God is not only impossible for the vast majority of people today, it is also found to be impossible for a growing number of Christians . . .'[49]

Kee's aim and purpose in his work was basic to the contemporary problem. He summarised it in the following statement,

> 'The future of Christianity is not viable unless we can find a way of presenting it which includes the old doctrine of God, but does not demand belief in God as a prior condition of becoming a Christian. My primary concern is not to attack belief in God, but to understand Christianity in such a way that in this age of faith, faith in Christ may be proclaimed as a real option . . Yet in the end this does become a criticism of belief in God. In religious times Christianity was a religious faith, but in our time it must be a secular one . . .'[50]

These statements have been quoted at length because they aptly summarise the inherent problems and also illustrate the tensions of this intermediate position. Kee's criticism of belief in God remains reluctant, and, as he shows, he wishes to retain the basic doctrine in some form. It would not, therefore seem appropriate to class his work under the heading of 'death of God'.

The 'death of God' movement as such belongs to the mid-1960's. The names mostly frequently associated with this are Altizer, Vahanian and Hamilton[51]. In general it may probably be claimed that

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49 Kee, A., The Way of Transcendence, Penguin, 1971, pp.80-1. The same issue had earlier been given wide publicity by Robinson with his question 'Can a truly contemporary person not be an atheist?' (Robinson, J.A.T., The New Reformation? S.C.M., 1965, pp.114-6.)

50 Kee, A., op.cit., p.x.

51 Their views are developed in such works as, Altizer, T.J.J., The Gospel of Christian Atheism, Collins, 1967; Vahanian, G., The Death of God, Braziller, New York, 1961; Hamilton, W., The New Essence of Christianity, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966 (first published 1961)

the writers concerned did not see themselves as part of a movement of negation but as making a positive reassertion of Christianity. Thus, Altizer stated,

> 'we must recognise that the proclamation of the death of God is a Christian confession of faith.'[52]

and saw it as a positive Christian duty to,

> 'will the death of God with the passion of faith.'[53]

He viewed this annihilation of God as a final and irreversible step, one willed by God himself. Hamilton saw the situation as being one of 'absence' or 'eclipse' rather than the final death of God. He pointed to an increasing awareness that,

> 'God has withdrawn, that he is absent, even that he is somehow dead.'[54]

To describe such an approach as atheism may be too simple, for there is the common assertion that God was once alive and is now dead. What appears to be being claimed is a change in the character of authentic human experience, so that the time when it was authentic to believe in, and worship God has now passed[55].

This difficulty in belief, which would seem to be the 'crisis of credibility' to which Berger refers[56], is one of which there is a high

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52 Altizer, T.J.J., op.cit., p.102.
53 Altizer, T.J.J., 'Creative theology in negation', in Peerman, D., (ed), Frontline Theology, S.C.M., 1967, p.82.
54 Hamilton, W., op.cit., p.56.
55 cf. Nicholls, W., op.cit., p.336.
56 Berger, P., op.cit., pp.131-56.

level of awareness. Yet it is difficult to determine its cause. Although certain factors can be assumed to contribute to this, they do not, in themselves, necessarily involve such a widespread loss of ability to believe as has been claimed. These factors include the basic concept of man's 'coming of age'[57], the decline in institutional religion, leading to a decline in the authority of religion, and the loss of power by religious language and symbols. The latter may be seen both in terms of changing attitudes to metaphysical approaches and of changing social and technological environments, which render much of the traditional symbolism less potent[58]. It is not possible to determine the relationship between the institutional decline and the crisis of credibility, and thus it cannot be claimed that lack of belief in God is due to failure to participate in organised religion, any more than to say that such non-participation is due to disbelief. It would seem that these represent complementary processes which are but part of the much larger change involved in secularization.

One important cause of this crisis of credibility may lie in the changing approaches to and understandings of, religious questions. This ultimately reverts to the question of language, discussed above. Thus,

> 'God and the language of religion have become but another vocabulary in which the reality of the human situation can be expressed. It is possible, therefore, to translate it into other terms.'[59]

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57 This will be developed below.

58 This is probably illustrated most clearly in the case of worship, with its heavy reliance on symbols. This will be considered more fully in section II.

59 Hessert, P., Christian Life, (New Directions in Theology, Vol.VI), Lutterworth, 1968, p.47.

In this sense, the problem is not especially modern, and such efforts at 'translation' include Feuerbach's insistence that Christian theology is true of man rather than of God, man having simply objectified his own ideal self[60]. Such a statement represents the attempt, found in every age, to express religious concepts in terms appropriate to contemporary society. The problem necessarily becomes more acute when that society is no longer dominated by religion. The relationship of the question of speaking of God in a secular age to secularization as a whole will be discussed below, but consideration must first be given to whether secularization itself may be regarded as a cause of the problem of the loss of meaning in the term 'God'. Thus it has been argued that this loss of meaning comes not from a deeper insight into the Christian faith (as some of the 'death of God' school would maintain) but from a cosmology which has destroyed the context in which men, up to the most recent times, have understood their existence. On this basis, it is said that it is primarily the process of secularization, (here, clearly, in the sense of dedivinization), which has caused the 'death of God'[61] and not that 'death' which has led to secularization[62].

The idea of secularization's reconstruction of cosmology leads to the question of transcendence. One aspect of traditional belief which causes particular difficulty in a secular age is the idea of the

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60 Feuerbach, L., The Essence of Christianity, Trubner, London, 1881, pp.33-43.

61 Here in the general sense of the loss of meaning for many, rather than in the specific sense of the American movement.

62 Cobb., J.B., A Christian Natural Theology, Lutterworth, 1966, pp.14-15.

transcendence of God. The problem has been summarised in Bultmann's statement that,

> 'Secularization may be characterised simply as the world being conceived by man as an object, and thus delivered over to technology as its object. This secularization takes place in every sphere of life, in morality, in law, in politics. For the relation of man to the transcendent has been abandoned in all spheres of life.'[63]

Thus it follows, that the idea of transcendence is, in a secular age, something alien to man's consciousness. This has never been an easy concept, but it may also be argued that the concept of immanence is equally problematical for contemporary man[64]. Thus the problem of speaking of God rests, partly at least, on the difficulty of describing his relationship to the world.

Although the actual 'death of God' movement was limited to a small group of writers and to a fairly short period of time, its implications are much wider. One outstanding question is whether God is fully dispensed with as a result of such arguments of his irrelevance and incomprehensibility? Is the movement ultimately atheist[65]? Although there is much variety in it, and it is therefore difficult to generalise, Jenkins' summary that,

> 'God is out although Godly attitudes remain in'[66]

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63 Bultmann, R., 'The idea of God and modern man', in Smith, R.G., (ed), World Come of Age, p.259.

64 'God is no longer conceived as the numinous, as a being who compels reverence, reigning beyond or above this world; yet even the notion of a God immanent 'within' the world in a metaphysical sense has now become more of a stone for stumbling than a help for faith.' auf der Maur, H.J., 'The difficulties of common prayer today', Studia Liturgica, X, (3/4), 1974, p.171.

65 cf. Richard, R.L., Secularization Theology, Burns and Oates, 1967, p.36ff.

66 Jenkins, D., Guide to the Debate about God, Lutterworth, 1966, p.54.

would seem to be a helpful diagnosis of the situation post mortem dei. This may be illustrated by the way in which some of those who subscribe to the idea of the death of God are nonetheless prepared to ascribe to Christ a status which can only be described as divine. Altizer, for example, writes in the following terms,

> 'If radical Christianity disembodies the primordial God, refusing even the name of the sovereign Creator, then a new or radical theology must seek an understanding of the uniquely Christian name of God, opening itself to a full theological understanding of the name of Jesus Christ. First, we must recognise that Jesus Christ is the name of the God who has become fully and totally incarnate, and thus it is a divine name, a name revealing the actual movement of God himself. The name of Jesus Christ is simply meaningless apart from its Old Testament background, for it actualised and historically real in Christ . . . '[67]

The theological problems outlined here are clearly of a different order from the sociological analyses discussed earlier. However, there are certain evident links between the two approaches. If Kee's contention concerning the impossibility for many people of belief in God is correct, this inability must be regarded as symptomatic of a number of types of secularization. There is a connection with all those categories of secularization theory which stress a decline in the supernatural or transcendent. Thus, this element is to be found in the 'conformity with this world' theory, and more especially in the transposition theory, in which Shiner described the shift from the grounding of 'knowledge, patterns of behaviour and institutional arrangements' in divine power to an understanding of these as being of 'purely human creation and responsibility'[68]. This would seem to reflect a basic loss of belief in the divine. This leads to a further link with the type of secularization classed as desacralization.

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67 The Gospel of Christian Atheism, pp.86-7.
68 Shiner, L., op.cit., p.214.

Ultimately, however, the problem of speaking of God in a secular age is rooted in the situation of a radically changed world-view, and estimation of the place of man in that world. Thus it is difficult to separate this question from other aspects of secularization.

'Man come of age'

Man's 'coming of age' may be understood in several ways; it may be applied to the fact that he will no longer regard God as a deus ex machina, and it often has particular reference to man's technological mastery of his environment. It is seen essentially as a further stage in man's development rather than as a complete and static point that man has reached. Along with this emphasis on man's 'coming of age' must be seen the new theological interest in man and recent developments in the doctrine of man. The idea of man's coming of age is taken as fundamental in much secularization discussion. This does not in itself represent a type of secularization, but is taken rather as a precondition or facilitating factor for various forms of the process.

The concept of man's new-found maturity is frequently attributed to Bonhoeffer, and was expressed by him in his prison letters. It is closely linked with his ideas on God.

> '. . . . Man's religiosity makes him look in his distress to the power of God in the world; he uses God as a deus ex machina. The Bible, however, directs him to the powerlessness and suffering of God; only a suffering God can help. To this extent we may say that the process we have described by which the world came of age was an abandonment of a false conception of God, and a clearing of the decks for the God of the Bible . .'[69]

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69 Letter of July 16th, 1944.

The implication of this concept of maturity for Bonhoeffer is that man has reached a stage in his development which demands not only that he lives up to the claim of self sufficiency he is making for himself, but also that he should develop a more mature approach to his thinking about God.

> 'God would have us know that we must live as men who can manage our lives without him.'[70]

What Bonhoeffer was saying here about man was not new[71], although it acquired a distinctive force by the way it formed such an integral part of his total theological perspective[72]. His statements have a number of possible implications other than those to which he drew attention. It may be questioned for example whether man's coming of age leaves him in a closer relationship with God, as Bonhoeffer wishes to stress, or whether it in fact marks the breakthrough by man into a post-religious era? As Paul claims to have put away the tutelage of the Law in his new-found freedom in Christ[73], is it to be concluded that modern man, in his maturity, can put away the shackles of religion[74]? To raise this type of question is to imply the idea of stages in human history such as the classification of history and thought into mytho-

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70 ibid.

71 cf. Ogletree, T.W., The Death of God Controversy, Abingdon Press, New York, 1966, p.15.

72 The idea that Bonhoeffer's total theology and concept of faith demanded the idea of the maturity of the world is developed by Obayashi, H., 'The world come of age: cultural fact or faith's demand', Union Seminary Quarterly Review, XXVI, (2), 1971, pp.99-116.

73 e.g. Rom.7:1-25.

74 This leads to the concept of 'religionless Christianity', also frequently associated with the name of Bonhoeffer. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

logical, ontological and functional periods[75]. According to this analysis, contemporary man is now entering the third of these stages[76].

> 'Man's increasing confidence in his ability to understand and control the forces of life form below, is leading in turn to an attitude to the world in which man is prepared to live pragmatically, on the basis of the truths he discovers within his functioning world.'[77]

Much of what is said in discussion of man's coming of age emphasises his technological mastery of the world[78]. This can be summarised in saying that

> 'man is living in a world governed by the natural sciences and technology, market values and verifiability, psychology and sociology, awareness of the hidden depths of the human minds.'[79]

This would suggest a close link with several of the aspects of the desacralization theory of secularization. The reification of nature and the dedivinization of many features of the natural world are often seen to be the product of scientific developments, which, in turn can be regarded as a sign of man's 'coming of age'. (The relationship of this concept to secularization as a whole has already been hinted at in saying that man's coming of age facilitates secularization. Some would go further, and say that secularization is made inevitable, and demanded by this coming of age[80].) The idea of man's mastery over the world is not as new as might be implied by some discussions. The Biblical doctrine of creation emphasised man's responsibility in respect of his powers over nature, and the Priestly

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75 This is the analysis of van Peursen, C., 'Man and reality - the history of human thought', Student World, XVI (1), 1963.
76 ibid., pp.13-21.
77 Williams, C., Faith in a Secular Age, Fontana, 1966, p.22.
78 cf. Chapter 1.
79 auf der Maur, H-J., op.cit., p.169.
80 e.g. Hamilton, W., 'The letters are a particular thorn; some themes in Bonhoeffer's prison writings', in Smith, R.G., op.cit., pp.145-51.

myth detailed the nature of man's authority[81].

The coming of age of man does not represent the attainment of a particular stage of maturity in a final and complete sense, but rather is a continuing process of maturation. Nor is it intended that by stressing the 'maturity' of modern man some form of judgement should be passed on the humanity of earlier ages. Jenkins has warned against this danger in writing,

> 'Nor do I see why we should succumb to the arrogant complacency of assuming that what we may call 'the modern world-view' is a final and decisive arbiter of what we . . can or ought to think.'[82]

It is not possible to quantify this maturity, for it is a relative term, and there is no one point in the development of civilization at which one can say that man 'came of age'. The concept carries with it a more fundamental problem, in the danger of thinking of man's coming of age in dualistic or even almost Gnostic terms[83], and thus of regarding maturity as bringing with it a special form of 'enlightenment'. Such a view removes the feeling for the need of growth and development, and thus reduces man's maturity to a static state.

Theologically, the idea of man's coming of age is open to criticism on two other grounds. The first is the heavy emphasis on man's growth in one area of his life, that of his technological matery, without equal concern for his maturity in other respects. Secondly,

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81 Gen.1:28-9.
82 Jenkins, David, The Glory of Man, S.C.M., 1966, p.15.
83 The parallel with Gnosticism would seem appropriate because of the stress on 'enlightenment' of various Gnostic sects.

it may be criticised for its apparent neglect of the doctrine of grace[84]. Indeed, it is possible to go further, and to say that this doctrine is so neglected that a charge of Pelagianism may be made[85]. The question raised by the charge of Pelagianism is more central to the issue of man's coming of age, and hence of secularization, than might at first appear. Although it is unlikely that many contemporary thinkers would accept so pessimistic a view of the,

> 'general wretchedness of man's lot and his enslavement to his desires'[86]

as did Pelagius' great opponent, Augustine, the underlying problem of the total view of man, and the question of his dependence on, or independence of, God, is still at the heart of the question of the extent to which man may be regarded as having come of age.

Some compromise between the differing answers likely to be given to such a question may be afforded by the recognition that secularization in certain forms, has been continuing over a long period, but that the essential 'newness' of the contemporary situation lies in the fact of the 'coming of age' not only of man, but of the world as a whole, with the additional new factor of the awareness of global unity[87]. Such

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84 The doctrine of grace is subject to many possible interpretations. However, a useful broad definition for the present context is provided by R.G. Smith,

> ' . .grace means the givenness of what we cannot make, and could not have imagined, let alone desired, for ourselves. Grace is the power which lies for the most part unheeded, and which can only be described in metaphors and hear in the feeble echoes of the might of its passage: it is a new dimension, it is an undeserved gift, it is the 'thereness' of existence . .' (The Doctrine of God, Collins, 1970, p.111).

85 Such a charge is specifically made against Cox by Ramsey, A.M., God, Christ and the World, S.C.M., 1969, p.25.

86 Kelly, J.N.D., Early Christian Doctrines, Black, 1958, p.363.

87 Edwards, D., Religion and Change, Hodder and Stoughton, 1969, pp.19-4

an emphasis, whilst not denying the abilities of man, also clearly indicates his responsibilities within a 'world come of age' and thus allows for a recognition of his dependence upon God.

One further dimension of the coming of age of man is the new theological interest in man himself. That man is a suitable object of theological study is an indication both of the new worth accorded to him and of the secularizing tendencies within theology which have facilitated such developments. The importance accorded to questions of man is represented by the Humanum study intitiated by the World Council of Churches in 1968[88]. That such studies are necessary may, in some measure be the result of urbanization and consequently of its accompanying secularization.

> 'In traditionally organised societies, personal identity is conferred upon the individual. A man may be known by his home and family . . . Insofar as society confers identity upon a person, he need not constantly identify himself - to strangers or himself . . . . In mobile industrial societies, identity is no longer conferred; it must be discovered or created. Youth, in particular, asks the question, 'Who am I?' . . In several ways contemporary society sets obstacles before the person seeking identity. In doing so, it forces people to rethink the issue of what it is to be human.'[89]

This very questioning of what it is to be human may be an indication of the complexity of and possibilities inherent in man[90]. This new theolo-

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88 The Humanum Studies were commissioned at Uppsala, 1968, because of the need to clarify questions about the criteria for 'humanization'. They were based on the belief that, for Christians, this is a theological question. The message of the Humanum studies may be summarized in the assertion that "doing theology for the sake of being human is the critical task and gift of the church" (W.C.C. The Humanum Studies, 1969-75, W.C.C. Geneva, 1975, p.106.)

89 Shinn, R., Man: The New Humanism, (New directions in Theology Today, VI,) Lutterworth, 1968, pp.60-1.

90 cf. Jenkins, D., What is Man? S.C.M., 1970, pp.7-19.

gical interest in man may be taken as an example of 'conformity with this world', but this may afford only a narrow understanding. It must also be interpreted in conjunction with the Church's new understandings of 'the world' which will be discussed below.

'Man come of age', although an accepted and frequently-used phrase, has little meaning without some fuller reference to the terms in which this maturity may be said to have occurred. It is not an absolute concept, but, nevertheless, remains fundamental to much thought on secularization.

Concepts of the world.

If the idea of man's coming of age may be seen as fundamental to, and underlying, many forms of secularization, then it follows that changes in the thinking about man's society and environment will be at least as important in their implications for secularization. As has been shown above[91], the term 'secularization' derives from the Latin 'saeculum' meaning 'world' in the sense of 'this present age'. Therefore, theological views and evaluations of the world will clearly be significant for this process.

Theological thought on the world is inevitably strongly influenced by N.T. uses. Of the two terms employed there, αἰών and κοσμος, the first, like the Latin saeculum, refers to a given period of time, or an age, whilst the second, like its Latin counterpart, mundus, has the basic meaning of order or arrangement[92], which thereby comes to refer

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91 ch.1.
92 Liddell, H.G. and Scott, R., Greek-English Lexicon, O.U.P., 1869.

to the physical created world. Part of the problem of understanding the New Testament attitude to 'the world' arises from a confusion of the two terms. This is exemplified by the variations in translation of in Gal.1:4[93].

The N.T. problem is not simply one of confusion between αἰων and κοσμος. Even the word κοσμος has no real clarity in its N.T. usage. At least four different meanings may be distinguished there. These are,

i) Personal adornment[94]. Th word is used in this sense in 1.Pet.3:3[95].
ii) The sum total of created things. This, because it has been created by God is held to be fundamentally good. Without specifically using the term κοσμος this approval is clearly expressed by Col.1:16ff[96].
iii) The inhabited world of men. κοσμος here is used in a neutral sense, and is certainly not regarded as evil[97].
iv) The fourth meaning is the most significant for present purposes. κοσμος in this sense has been described as the concept under which,

> 'the world, and everything that belongs to it, appears as that which is at emnity with God.'[98]

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93 Gal.1:4, 'ὅπως ἐξέληται ἡμας ἐκ τοῦ αἰωνος τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος πονηροῦ'
was translated in the Authorised and Revised versions as 'from this present evil world', whilst the N.E.B. translators preferred 'out of this present age of wickedness'. It has been noted that Paul tends to identify κοσμος with αἰων οὗτος. (Kittel, G., (ed), Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Eerdmans/S.C.M., Vol. III, 1965 p.892.)

94 cf. Davies, J.G., Dialogue with the World, S.C.M., 1967, p.22.

95 'ὧν ἐστω οὐχ ὁ ἔξωθεν ἐμπλοκῆς τριχῶν καὶ περιθέσεως χρυσίων ἢ ἐνδύσεως ἱματίων κόσμος·

96 ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα, ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπι τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὁρατα καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα, εἴτε θρονοι εἴτε κυριότητες εἴτε ἀρχαὶ εἴτε ἐξουσίαι· τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτον ἔκτισται· καὶ αὐτος ἐστι πρὸ πάντων, καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῳ συνέστηκε.

97 e.g. Rom.1:8, Πρῶτον μεν εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου διὰ Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν, ὅτι ἡ πίστις ὑμων καταγγέλλεται ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ

98 Arndt, W., and Gingrich, F., op.cit.

> This understanding of κοσμος emphasises its transitoriness and thus its subsequent estrangement from God[99]. Thus, the N.T. writers find it impossible to use κοσμος for the eternal world of eschatological hope[100], - when the κοσμος is redeemed it ceases to be κοσμος and becomes βασιλεια τοῦ Θεοῦ [101].

This last meaning reflects the tension between the Church and the world which was to dominate so much later thought. In the New Testament it is evident in such passages as 1 Jn.5:19[102], of which it has been asserted that κοσμος ,

> 'is used not for the created universe, nor for the human race as such, but for the life of human society as organised under the power of evil.'[103]

It is evident that in this latter sense, Christians would be expected to reject the κοσμος, but the early Church does not seem to have taken up thoroughly world-renouncing attitudes, and there was a strong reaction against the dualistic world-denying views of such groups as the Gnostics and Manichees[104]. Thus, the meaning of κοσμος in many N.T. contexts would have been the pagan society in which the writers lived. Whilst it is impossible to generalise, and reference to the specific context of statements about the κοσμος is always essential, it may be fair to say that κοσμος was to the first-century mind what

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99 Kittel, G., op.cit., p.885.
100 ibid.
101 ibid., p.894.
102 καὶ ὁ κοσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται.
103 Dodd, C.H., The Johannine Epistles, Hodder and Stoughton, 1946, p.39. A similar meaning is to be found in James 1:27 (ἄσπιλον ἑαυτὸν τηρεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου) where κοσμος refers to the organised system of paganism in rebellion against God.
104 Manicheism, which arose in the 3rd Century A.D. was a Babylonian form of Gnosticism, based on the struggle between light and darkness, good and evil. The 'elect' were obliged to practice extreme ascetisism, as proof of their renunciation of the physical world. (cf. Wand, J.W.C., A History of the Early Church, Methuen, 1937, pp.140-2).

'secular' was to the nineteenth century mind. The term 'secular' had moved from the simple, neutral sense of 'of the present age' to having the meaning of the sphere in which neither the Church nor the Christian conscience had any right to interfere[105]. One of the most illuminating statements of the view of the relationship between the Church and the world in the early Christian Church comes from the epistle to Diognetus[106]. That the question was there considered at such length may, in itself, be taken as evidence of the very real tension that there was over this question.

The attitudes of the N.T. and the early Church to the have been outlined at some length because they represent a heritage of ideas by which even the contemporary Church is inevitably strongly influenced. It is only against this background that it is possible to discuss some examples of contemporary theological thought on the world. One concept arising from more recent tought is that of 'genuine worldliness'. This was frequently asserted by Bonhoeffer to be a proper description of the Christian life[107]. He saw such worldliness as being

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105 Richardson, A., A Dictionary of Christian Theology, pp.310-1.

106 The epistle examines the question in ch.5, 'The Church in the World',

> 'For Christians cannot be distinguished from the rest of the human race by country or language or customs. They do not live in cities of their own; they do not use a peculiar form of speech; they do not follow an eccentric manner of life.... Yet although they live in Greek and Barbarian cities alike, as each man's lot has been cast, and follow the customs of the country in clothing and food and other matters of daily living, at the same time they give proof of the remarkable and admittedly extraordinary constitution of their own commonwealth. They live in their own countries, but only as aliens. They have a share in everything as citizens, and endure everything as foreigners . . . . They busy themselves on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws, but in their own lives go far beyond what the laws require. . . .
>
> What the soul is to the body, that christians are in the world . . . The soul dwells in the body, but does not belong to the body, and Christians dwell in the world, but do not belong to the world . . .' (Richardson, C.C., Early Christian Fathers, Library of Christian Classics, Vol.1, S.C.M., 1953, pp.216-7.)

107 cf. Phillips, J.A., The Form of Christ in the World, Collins, 1967, p.150.

a true goal for the Christian, and viewed the Cross as the

> 'setting free for life in genuine worldliness'[108]

This concept of worldliness necessarily involves a positive evaluation of the world,

> 'The worldly real is itself drawn into the action as sharing in the forming of it. Incarnation does not smash the worldly real and does not make the world Christian - that again would be the false tyranny of the norm outside, dressed in Christian clothing. Bonhoeffer transcends the idealistic devaluation of the real and avoids the positivistic over-valuation. Being in Christ is participating in the world.'[109]

Here, there is dependence upon an aspect of the desacralization theory, for the abolition of the possibility of thinking in terms of the two spheres of the sacred and the secular makes the worldliness of the Christian inescapable for Bonhoeffer[110]. However, Bonhoeffer's view of worldliness may also be seen as having an O.T. grounding, and it has been argued that if this perspective is omitted,

> 'one runs the risk of conceiving of it as the encounter of faith with secularization.'[111]

Affimations of worldliness also involve the according of value to the world itself. This may be seen in terms which imply that the world is already full of Christian potential, and that to 'secularize'

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108 Ethics, p.297.
109 Bethge, E., op.cit., p.74.
110 Ethics, pp.196-8. For Obayaski (op.cit.) this worldliness was demanded by Bonhoeffer's concept of faith.
111 Dumas, A., Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Theologian of Reality, (E.T.) S.C.M., 1971, p.154.

the world is really to draw out its latent Christianity[112], or in the more usual and general sense of giving a positive evaluation to the world and its concerns.

There are many ways in which the Church can and does make positive affirmations about the world. Some of these have been considered above[113], as examples of the sociological category of 'conformity with this world', and the connection with this category is obvious. It is evident from the examples cited there that the concerns of political, economic and community life have acquired a new status in their own right in Christian thinking, and not merely as an area of mission for the Church to dominate.

> 'God's conversation with his Church is a conversation about the world, the Church must be prepared to speak about the world if it wants to speak with God. The world is the direct object of God's activity.'[114]

Traditionally, Christian thought has been Christocentric and Theocentric. It remains so, but the world and its concerns have gained an increasing importance. The approach involved has been aptly described as 'thinking from below'[115]. This change of stance represents an important part of secularization, for the lack of religious or supernatural reference points for modern man[116] makes such an approach essential.

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112 An example of this approach is the statement that,
> 'To 'Christianize' the world means to 'secularize' it, to guarantee to it its own scarcely sketched, scarcely imagined heights and depths, which have previously lain buried in sin'.

(Metz, J.B., Theology of the World, Burns and Oates, 1969, p.83).

113 Chapter 2.

114 Niles, D.T., Statement at the Evanston Assembly of the W.C.C. 1954, cited in Symanowski, H., The Christian Witness in an Industrial Society, Collins, 1966, p.39.

115 Williams, C., op.cit., pp.39-42.

116 cf. Woollard, A., 'City Man - 1', Frontier, XI (1), 1968, pp.13-15.

Yet although it is true to say that secularization means and involves increased attention to 'this world' or the present era, there is a danger of a misplaced emphasis here. As has been stressed above secularization also means the breaking down of the barriers between the sacred and the secular, as well as a fresh understanding of the nature of the holy[117]. Thus, there is a possibility of sacred significance in everything, so that to speak of the world as a concern of the Church, or as a proper subject of theological activity may be in some ways to revert to the former mode of thinking of a separation between the sacred and the secular[118]. Thus, it would seem essential that the thought on the world should be seen against the wider background of such understandings of the holy, the sacred and the secular.

In general terms, however, the more positive affirmations and evaluations of the world that are being made by the Church and in contemporary theology can be seen both as causative of, and as resultant from, secularization. They are causative in that the statements of 'worldly' concerns and interests help to lead to a convergence of the type indicated by Shiner's category of conformity. They are resultant inasmuch as the removal of the Church from its former position of dominance enables the world to be seen in a new perspective. Moreover, the very secularity of the world may be seen as resultant from Christianity[119], and thus the close relationship between the Church and the world is affirmed.

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117 cf. Davies, J.G., Every Day God.

118 Swanson, G.E., 'Modern secularity, its meaning, sources and interpretation', in Cutler, D. (ed), The Religious Situation, 1968, Boston, Beacon, 1968, p.802.

119 This view was discussed in the context of the 'historical drama' approach to secularization at the beginning of this chapter.

It has already been stated that there is an evident connection between this affirmation of the world by the Church, and Shiner's second category of secularization, conformity with this world. However, there is an important distinction between the two concepts. Whilst Shiner sees increasing convergence between the interests of the world and those of the Church, the theological approach, although emphasising the essential unity of the concerns of the Church and the world, is also aware of a dimension transcending the usual situations of the world. This is often expressed most clearly in thought on mission; the Church is of the world, but still has a mission to it.

The Church

Changes and developments in the understanding and views of the function of the Church have an important place as an aspect of secularization. In most interpretations of the process, it is the Church which 'undergoes' secularization, either in terms of institutional change, or of its relationships, social or conceptual, with the wider community within which it exists. Whilst questions of institutional decline and of some of the changing interests of the Church have been considered above[120], the concern here is mainly with theological thought on the Church, and the implications of some of its structural changes[121].

The first area of change centres around the understanding of the relationship between the Church and the world. The status of 'the world' in contemporary religious thought has been discussed above, and the concern here is with the understanding of the place of the

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120 ch.2.

121 Here, as elsewhere, the problem of a 'cultural lag' between the theologian and the 'man in the pew' is very real. It is also particularly acute in the area of worship, and will therefore arise in the discussions in Section II.

Church in that world. Is the Church seen as essentially an integral part of the world, or as in some way a bridge between the sacred and the secular; in the world, but not of it? The latter suggestion in many ways reflects the traditional view of the Church, and the relationship between the Church and the world in this conceptualisation has been graphically described in saying that,

> 'The Church was viewed as the ark, as Noah's ark, perilously afloat amidst the turbulent seas of this world; outside the safety of this vessel mankind is going down to destruction, and the only salvation is to be dragged from the deep into the safety of the ecclesiastical ship. Or again, the Church has been seen as an armed camp and individual Christians as members of the army of the Lord of hosts set in the midst of active enemies. From time to time Christian soldiers sally forth from their pallisades to drag back from the hostile environment as many as they can. . .'[122]

Both of the images employed here appear frequently in the language of many traditional Christian hymns and prayers[123], and the relationship between the Church and the world has thus often been seen as one of implacable hostility and opposition. There is much truth in the statement that the Church has often been exalted at the expense of the world[124]. Traditionally, the Church has been set over against the

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122 Davies, J.G., Dialogue with the World, pp.19-20.

123 Such imagery combines in von Lowenstern's hymn (translated by P. Pusey) 'Lord of our life and God of our salvation' (Methodist Hymn Book), which contains the verse, 'See round thine ark the hungry billows curling;/See how thy does their darts envenomed they are hurling, . . .'. The military image draws heavily on the O.T. concept of the 'Lord of Hosts' and is to be found in such hymns as Duffeild's 'Stand up, stand up for Jesus'; F.R. Havergal's 'Who is on the Lord's side?' and Luther's 'Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott'. (all M.H.B.) A hymn which does not employ this imagery, but epitomises one of the traditional views of the relationship between the Church and the world is Isaac Watts' 'Christ hath a garden walled around', which describes the Church as, 'Chosen by love and fenced by grace/ from out the world's wide wilderness' (Songs of Praise, O.U.P., 1931).

124 Mascall, E.L., Theology and the Future, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1968, p.130.

world in a position of dominance[125], thereby continuing the idea of struggle against the world[126]. Whilst it would be a mistaken over-generalisation to claim that none of this type of thinking remains (for in certain groups, and especially among some conservative evengelical sects, it manifestly does) on the whole, general ways of thinking have undergone radical change. This may be seen from some of the ways in which the Church is 'conforming to the world'[127] as well as from the changes in the theological understanding of the Church.

A second change in the concept of the place of the Church in the world is represented by the idea of 'the servant Church'. This is by no means a new way of understanding the Church, but it is a concept which acquires a fundamentally new significance when the Church is no longer seen as dominating society. The 'servant' imagery, whilst having obvious meaning, may also be seen in the light of the possible Christian collective interpretation of the servant songs of Deutero - Isaiah. Whatever the origin of the symbolism of the servant Church, the meaning is clear, - its role is seen to be that of serving the local, national or world community in whatever form may be appropriate. According to this view of the Church, such service is not a peripheral interest, secondary to the liturgical or evangelistic function, but a vital and central concern. Thus, on this view,

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125 cf. van den Heuvel, A., The Humiliation of the Church, S.C.M., 1966, esp. ch.3.

126 This idea is clear in many of the Agreed Syllabuses of Religious Instruction, particularly those of the middle decades of this century. Some of these will be discussed in chapter 11.

127 cf. chap.2.

> ' . . . It is impossible to think of the Church in the world without seeing it as a serving presence. Other bodies may serve mankind, and in so doing may be indistinguishable from the Church. That, however, in no way detracts from the fact that the Church must exist as a serving presence, since the fundamental reason for her existence is the claim that the love revealed in Jesus Christ is basic to human life . .'[128]

Such concepts of its role as 'servant' are also problematical for the Church. The processes of 'conformity' and of 'transposition' which are reflected in the growing concern of the Church for social, economic and political issues have led to the impression in the minds of some that certain sections of the Church are only concerned with such issues[129]. Thus there can arise a tension between,

> 'those who stress the primacy of proclamation and traditional mission, and those who stress the Churches' mission of justice and service. To separate proclamation and service is, for many, a false dichotomy, a narrowing down of the Gospel into one or another pole. But to others . . . . even to contend that it is a false dichotomy betrays erroneous thinking about the nature of mission and evangelism . .'[130]

Whilst this tension has always been present in Christian thinking, it is especially significant in the contemporary situation. The tension is probably creative, in that it may help to lead to wider thinking on the real role of the Church in the world.

A third area of change, and perhaps the most significant, concerns the understanding of the structures of the Church. If the Church is

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128 Wesson, A., (ed), Experiments in Renewal, Epworth, 1971, p.3. Similar arguments are put forward by van den Heuvel (op.cit., p.54), who writes,

> 'The Church proves her identity only by existing for others, and it is only there that she gets her authority . . The Church is a slave girl in Biblical language . . not preparing to be there for others, but being there for others; she cannot exist for her own benefit . . She cannot get out of the world to prepare herself for service.

129 cf. Dickinson, R.D.N., To set at liberty the oppressed, W.C.C., Geneva, 1975, p.41.

130 ibid.

undergoing any process of secularization, then one important feature of this must be the recognition[131] that the Church is subject to the same organisational dynamics and structures as any other contemporary social institution. Thus the Church, like these institutions, becomes more open to criticism of its own structures. Such criticism will arise both from within the Church and from outside. It is very often directed against the 'monolithic' structure of many of the larger ecclesiastical bodies, and criticism of this sort is most often levelled from within the Church[132]. It is, perhaps, because of a sense of frustration with these large, 'establishment' institutions, that so-called 'para-institutions' have arisen in a number of areas of life[133]. Within the Church a number of groups have sprung up over recent years which may be described as 'para-Church'[134]. These groups are seen as existing as 'Churches alongside the Churches'[135], their members remaining in membership of the various major denominations, but feeling a particular allegiance to the smaller, para-Church group. There is often some economic discipline within such a group, as well as commitment to particular, often short-term objectives. These factors enable easy identification of the membership of the group. There are obvious

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131 cf. ch.2.

132 Whilst the Churches are often involved in struggles for the 'liberation' of various groups, there is also a feeling that the Churches themselves may be agencies of oppression, with immutable structures; cf. Slack, K., Nairobi Narrative, S.C.M., 1976, pp.59-60.

133 One example of this is the 'free-school' movement in the U.S.A. and in Britain, the underlying concept is developed fully in the work of Ivan Illich (Deschooling Society, Penguin, 1973).

134 Vincent, J., 'The Para-Church: an affirmation of New Testament theologies', Study Encounter, X (1), 1974.

135 ibid., p.1.

similarities here with the classic typology of the sect[136], and whilst the theology of such groups is usually far more liberal than that of the sect, the description has not been rejected by some of those involved with the para-Church[137]. Vincent sees the role of such groups as being that of 'shock troops'[138]. The support and help that such groups can give to the mainstream denominations is necessarily limited by numbers and by the informal structures[139]. There are numerous examples of new groupings of Christians arising outside traditional Church structures. These include a variety of,

> 'transconfessional groups and movements gathered around certain experiences, programmes and goals, or, more properly, drawn together by a common engagement in mission which is understood as the mission of the Church at the present juncture of history . .'[140]

The existence of such groups raises the whole question of the relationship of 'primary' (face-to-face) groups and 'secondary' (larger and more impersonal) groups. As Davis[141] argues, when Church and society coincided, there was little need for Christian primary groups, but the

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136 This typology, which contrasts the tight-knit, world-rejecting structure of the sect with the more open, outward-looking structure of the denomination is classically developed by Troeltsch (The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, Macmillan, 1931, cf. especially vol.1, p.331). A similar analysis is to be found in Wilson, B.R., 'An analysis of sect development', American Sociological Review, XXIV, 1959, pp.3-15, and 'A typology of sects in a dynamic and comparative perspective', Archives de Sociologie de Religion, XVI, 1963, pp.49-63.

137 Vincent, J., op.cit., p.11.

138 ibid.

139 There is an interesting comparison here with the various views of the relationship between the charismatic movement and the major denominations. A discussion of these will be found in the first appendix.

140 Miguez - Bonino, J., 'A Latin American attempt to locate the question of unity', in What Kind of Unity, W.C.C. Geneva, 1974, reprinted in Jesus Christ Frees and Unites, section dossiers for the 5th Assembly of the W.C.C., 1975, II (2), pp.27-8.

141 Davis, C., God's Grace in History, pp.67-70.

weakness of the Church at present is that it is based on secondary groups which have no foundation in corresponding primary groups

> 'Without primary groups, Christianity cannot strike deep roots. Living in the secular society Christians should form such groups for the maturing of their faith. Of their nature these groups will be small, impersonal and requiring stimulus rather than organisation.'[142]

The significance of the development of such groups will vary considerably, and no general assessment is therefore possible, but it is interesting to compare their rise with Shiner's decline hypothesis. Two main points would seem to emerge. Firstly, whilst the numbers involved are comparatively small, and general conclusions are not therefore possible, it may well be that such activist 'commitment-groups' are symptomatic of a general dissatisfaction with large institutions as such, and that therefore statistics showing decline in membership of the larger, more formal bodies are misleading because they cannot take account of the growth in this kind of commitment. Secondly, whereas the sociology of religion is virtually limited to Western, developed countries in which it sees institutional decline as a major feature of contemporary religion, the theological perspective also includes the 'Third World' and in particular, Latin America and Africa, where the rise of new forms of Christian groups is particularly striking and significant. These two factors are, moreover, closely related. It is in such areas, where social change is most acute, that new forms of social organisation may first emerge[143]. The example

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142 ibid., p.68.

143 At the Geneva conference of the W.C.C. on the theme 'Man in Community', this fact was noted, and the Churches were urged to look to such developing nations that they might learn from them. (cf. Mackie, S.G., 'Changing institutions - what role can Christians play?' Study Encounter, VI (3), 1970, p.121.)

may be taken of Latin America, where the conventional form of Church structure tends to be found in traditional 'closed' societies, but two other types of church, classified as the 'modernising' and the 'prophetic' are emerging[144]. The 'modernising' church changes with the rapidly changing society, placing more emphasis on aspects of social action, but being in danger of becoming impersonal in the process. The second type, the 'prophetic' Church consists of groups largely identifying with the oppressed classes of society. Yet this group remains essentially concerned with socio-political action, for,

> 'such prophetic perspective does not represent an escape into a world of unattainable dreams. It demands scientific knowledge of the world as it really is ..'[145]

These two examples from Latin America provide a useful illustration of the type of change that can occur with secularization. The 'modernising' Church has been described as a kind of 'false secularization'[146], having made changes in its outward forms, and yet remaining essentially unchanged in its underlying thinking. The 'prophetic' church, however, whilst having certain limited parallels with Vincent's 'para-Church', in that it centres around the common experience of involvement with a particular cause, would also be in danger of failing to accept the full challenge of its situation, and becoming a permanent 'haven of the masses', rather than constantly moving forward[147]. This too, is one of the problems of secularization in any society[148].

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144 Friere, P., 'Education, liberation and the Church', Study Encounter, IX (1), 1973, (SE/38).
145 ibid., p.14.
146 ibid., p.12.
147 ibid., pp.14-5.
148 The problem is particularly acute in areas such as experiments in worship. Some aspects of this will be discussed in Section 2.

From these comments on changing church structures it is evident that an underlying purpose of effectiveness in influencing other areas of human activity is assumed. Thus there is the risk here of a reversion to a mentality of dominance over these areas by the Church. Because of the awareness of this danger, it has been argued that the best means of the Church attaining these objectives is by indirect influence.

> '. . . This should be so, not as a simple matter of tactics but as a matter of principle . . . members of churches should influence the life of other organisations as committed members of those organisations, who claim no privileges for themselves or their opinions because they bear a Christian label . . .'[149]

Such an attitude represents a form of secularization which, although it may be described as 'conformity to this world' has a far more positive aspect to it than many of the features of that process so far described. However, the statement still implies an acceptance of the division of activities into the sacred and the secular, even though the 'secular' organisations may be being used for 'sacred' purposes.

All of these statements on the structures of the Church imply a move towards a new openness in the Church. This has been seen as demanded by the Church's situation in contemporary society,

> 'Mobilizing the people of God for mission today means releasing them from structures that inhibit them in the Church and enabling them to open out in much more flexible ways to the world in which they live. In this world we

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149 Jenkins, Daniel, Beyond Religion, S.C.M., 1962, p.86. Distinctions still remain, however. Whereas, formerly, there was a division between 'sacred' and 'secular' organizations, the distinction may now be one of method within the same organisation. This may be compared with the views of Gerharz discussed in chapter 2 under the heading of 'conformity with this world'.

> need to meet others, across all the frontiers, in new relationships that mean both listening and responding, both giving and receiving . . .'[150]

Openness in structure and belief inevitably creates tension within the Church, for this may permit of ideas or communal forms which for some may go beyond the bounds of 'orthodoxy'[151]. Yet this tension may in itself be creative and necessary to the flexibility called for in the statement quoted above.

The final form of change in the understanding of the Church is in the realm of ecumenicity. This involves many major issues and will only be considered briefly here in terms of its relationship to secularization. The movement and its growth may be considered in a number of forms, including both the growth in understanding between local churches of various denominations and the more formal levels of ecumenism represented by the work of the World Council of Churches[152]. In recent years there has been a movement away from a simplistic approach to unity to one taking account of the many social and cultural factors influencing different forms of denominational allegiance[153].

It is Wilson's thesis that ecumenism must be seen as a response to secularization. He viewed it as the Church's sole means of survival in the face of this process,

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150 W.C.C. (ed. Goodall, N.,) The Uppsala Report, Geneva, 1968, p.33.

151 The limitations to this kind of openness have been usefully described in the statement,
'Even a Church with open doors is not a fair where each and every opinion can set up a stall'. (Rahner, K., The Shape of the Church to Come, (E.T.) S.P.C.K., 1974, p.74).

152 The history of these formal structures can be traced from the meeting of the World Missionary Conference, through to the First Assembly of the W.C.C. at Amsterdam in 1948, and hence to the later assemblies, as well as the setting up of the permanent secretariat in Geneva.

153 cf. the wide range of issues considered in Section 2 of the Nairobi Assembly, under the theme 'What Unity Requires'.

> 'What must be recognised . . . is that ecumenicalism, even at its most successful, is not in itself a revival of religion, nor a reconversion of society. It is the turning in on itself of institutionalised religion, as its hold on the wider social order has diminished. The healing of divisions is something which restores the morale of Churchmen, ... The energy which Churchmen have put in to the ecumenical movement has been perhaps in rough proportion as they have lost hope of evangelisation of the world. Essentially, this has been a movement directed inwards into the life of the Church, not outwards into the life of the wider society, which remains essentially unmoved by ecumenical achievement, and perhaps even rather suspicious of it. The laity who remain committed to their various denominations appear markedly less enthusiastic for actual assimilation with other bodies than do the clergy. Nor does ecumenicalism achieve much in the way of increasing the influence of re-united bodies . . .'[154]

This view of ecumenism was developed in Wilson's Religion in Secular Society, published in 1966. The attempts at unity on which he was commenting were essentially attempts at structural unity. Although there have been certain areas of progress along these lines (for example, the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in Europe[155] and the Congregationalist and Presbyterian Churches in England and Wales),

> 'it nevertheless remains true that the great majority of the Churches are not really seeking closer bonds of unity . . .'[156]

Ecumenism has not, on the whole, followed the lines of development towards structural unity, and thus differs from the pattern on which Wilson was basing his argument. Furthermore, it is not possible to substantiate the charge of 'introversion' which Wilson makes against

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154 Wilson, B.R., Religion in Secular Society, pp.175-6.
155 W.C.C. Workbook, p.25.
156 ibid., p.25.

the movement. If the ecumenical movement is to be identified with such organisations as the British and World Councils of Churches (and such an identification would appear necessary) then the more frequent charge raised by many today is of being too outward-looking in their concerns[157]. There is a further argument against treating secularization as a 'cause' of ecumenism. This rests on the problem already encountered in chapter 2, of identifying periods at which society really was 'religious'.

> 'If secularization is so deeply ingrained in European society, it is difficult to explain why the modern period is specifically the 'age of ecumenism'[158]

It would therefore seem that ecumenism should not be identified with attempts towards the structural unity of the Churches so much as with their co-operative efforts at mutual understanding and in ventures which give expression to their belief. Such developments may well be, in part at least, a reaction to secularization, and thusfar, it is possible to express a limited agreement with Wilson's views. However, it would seem that his views on the real nature of ecumenical activity have not been substantiated by subsequent trends.

The general features which may be identified from the four areas of change described above would appear to be consistent with the sociological theories of conformity and of transposition. There is

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157 One of the most widely-publicised examples is the W.C.C.'s programme to combat racism. This has provoked widespread controversy, with arguments based on the grounds that such involvement in the politics of revolution is not a rightful concern of the Church.

158 Turner, B.S., 'The sociological explanation of ecumenicalism' in Mitton, C.L., The Social Sciences and the Churches, T. & T. Clark, 1972, p.236. He also argues that there are major comparative problems in this theory of ecumenism. For example, while institutional decline in Britain is said to 'cause' ecumenism, it is the religious revival in America which is the cause of unity. (ibid., pp.236-7).

a clear case for seeing the changing structures and concepts of the Church as well as the growth of ecumenism, as part of the wider process of conformity to this world. The Church is, in many ways, adapting itself to the organisational patterns found in many large institutions. The connections with the transposition theory are, perhaps, less self-evident, but it would seem that these are present. Thus, in discussion of the transposition theory it was noted that one of the effects of the resultant transformation of religious institutions from primary to secondary ones is the creation of a problem of plausibility for the institutions themselves. Furthermore, the recognition and treatment of the Church as an institution following the patterns of other human organisations may also be seen as an example of the transposition theory.

'Religionless Christianity'

The final theological dimension of secularization may be classified under the phrase 'religionless Christianity'. Like other slogans of this sort the phrase has been used widely and has thus lost some of its precision of meaning.

Although the concept of 'religionless Christianity' belongs essentially to contemporary thought, the argument which it reflects is, at root, a continuation of Biblical controversy over the place and practice of religion. The eighth century prophets give a clear example of this in their attack upon contemporary attitudes, which stressed the importance of the practice of the sacrificial cult whilst omitting a concern for personal morality[159]. In the New

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159 e.g. Am.5:21-5. Similar thoughts are to be found in such passages as Is.1:10-8; Hos.6:6-8, etc.

Testament, the argument centres around the 'faith versus works' issue. Paul, in Romans[160], was arguing for the supremacy of faith over the 'works' of the O.T. law[161]. The other side of the argument is provided by the author of 'James'[162], who may have been replying to a misunderstanding of Paul's teaching on the part of some within the early Church. He stressed the priority of 'good works' over mere professions of faith[163]. A similar argument arose at the time of the Reformation, when the 'works' concerned were those demanded by the Church, as opposed to the 'justification by faith' of the reformers[164].

Both of these types of 'works' are relevant to the contemporary discussion of 'religionless Christianity'. Secularization is seen by some to be leading to the decline or disappearance of institutional religion, and thereby of the demands of a social organisation upon the individual. Others would see the secularization of religion as leading to a mere social activism, often demanding no sort of profession of faith[165].

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160 This thought underlies much of his teaching, but is to be found especially in Rom.2-7.

161 The whole question of the interpretation of νομος is problematical, and no simple view of its meaning is being assumed here. (cf. for example, Barrett, C.K., The Epistle to the Romans, Black, 1962, p.84.)

162 James 2:14-26.

163 Whilst Paul and James are usually seen as being opposed in this argument it is possible that their positions were, in fact, fairly close, and that the difference between them is mainly one of emphasis. Or it may be that Ropes is correct in his statement that,

> 'James has simply not learned to use Paul's theology, and betrays not the slightest comprehension of the thought of Paul about faith and the works of the Law' (Ropes, J.H., James (I.C.C.) Clark, 1916, p.205).

164 The protests of many of the reformers were directed against the 'works' of penances, indulgences and the like, which many people believed to be the sole means of justification. The emphasis of the reformers was on a simple faith, which they saw as essential to justification. (cf. Green, V.H.H., Renaissance and Reformation, Arnold, 1952, pp.111-8).

165 This may be seen as part of the transposition theory, in terms of the view of secularization as potentially leading to a 'totally anthropologised religion'. (cf. chap.2).

The twentieth century idea of 'religionless Christianity' is usually traced back to Barth and his attack upon religion. This was launched in his Church Dogmatics where he stated that,

> '. . . religion is unbelief. It is a concern, indeed, we say that it is the one great concern of godless man.'[166]

Barth distinguishes between Christian faith, which he sees as God's revelation of himself in Jesus Christ, and 'all religion' which he sees as man's futile search starting from his own godless position[167]. Two aspects can be distinguished in this attack on religion. The first is against religion in terms of man's reaching out to God, with its production of cultic forms which come to emphasise religious practice, and thus tempt man to trust in these forms. The second is against religion in its tendency to set up categories and areas of the 'sacred' and 'the secular'.

> 'The danger in making religion a separate realm lies not only in the idolatry that results in relation to the religious; it lies also in the fact that the non-religious realm is thus withdrawn from the full scrutiny of Christ's demands.'[168]

Although the name of Barth is thus associated with the attack on religion, the idea was developed and brought to wider attention by Bonhoeffer. The possibility of Christians being 'religionless' is discussed in his letter of April 30th, 1944.

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166 Barth, K., Church Dogmatics, I (2), (E.T.) Clark, 1956, p.280.
167 Williams, C., op.cit., pp.51-2.
168 ibid., p.52.

> 'We are moving towards a completely religionless time; people as they are now simply cannot be religious any more . . . . Our whole nineteen-hundred-year old Christian preaching and theology rests upon the 'religious a priori' of mankind . . . . If man . . becomes radically religionless . . . . what does that mean for Christianity? . . . . Are there religionless Christians? If religion is only a garment of Christianity . . . then what is a religionless Christianity?'[169]

Whilst Bonhoeffer thus outlined the problem, he did not survive to expand its answer. To see the implications of this question, it is necessary to consider briefly Bonhoeffer's concept of religion. It is not possible to reduce his thought on the subject to a single definition; rather, it is necessary to consider the constituent elements of his view of religion. These include the ways of thinking of God as a deus ex machina, and thinking in terms of the 'two spheres'[170]. It also,

> 'means individualistic piety . . . It means thinking of religion as a special compartment of life, or 'being religious in a particular way by means of some method or other making something of oneself . . It is not simply identical with the law in the Biblical sense. Rather, religion . . means an attitude which regards man's life as being somehow completed by the addition of God. And this addition of God is variously regarded as an individual experience, an experience at the boundaries of human need . . . or as some other extension of the world or of the self.'[171]

The five elements of individualism, metaphysics, the concept of a separate province of life[172], God as a deux ex machina and the perversion of religion into a privilege have been seen as the key to an understanding of Bonhoeffer's complex concept of religion[173].

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169 Letters and Papers from Prison, 1967 edition, pp.152-3.
170 Smith, R.G., World Come of Age, p.15.
171 ibid., p.15.
172 There is a clear parallel here with Shiner's differentiation theory of secularization.
173 Bethge, E., op.cit., pp.78-80.

Whilst Bonhoeffer's thought on religion tends to focus upon, and to reject these features of religion, it would seem that it may be possible to generalise to the extent of saying that what he was rejecting was the outward 'religiosity' rather than the religion itself. This rejection was seen as necessary in order to allow faith the freedom for its development and expression[174]. The thought of Christianity without this 'garment' was clearly very important to Bonhoeffer, and two main influences in leading to this position have been suggested[175]. The first is the reluctance of early Christianity to be called a religion[176] This may be largely because of the wide variety of types of mystical and philosophical systems, as well as such abhorrations as the cult of the Emperor, which prevailed in the world of early Christianity. The second, and major influence is clearly Barth[177]. In his letter of 30th April 1944, Bonhoeffer expressed surprise that Barth had not continued his battle against religion. It has been suggested above that it may well have been religiosity, rather than religion, against which Bonhoeffer was protesting, and it is significant here to note that the form of religion which prevailed in Germany in his time tended to be otherworldly and negative[178].

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174 cf. Obayaski, H., op.cit., p.102.
175 Dumas, A., op.cit., pp.174-84.
176 ibid., pp.175-7.
177 ibid., pp.178-84.
178 A useful description of German religion at this time has been provided by Richardson,

> 'During Bonhoeffer's last days in prison, it would appear from his fragmentary writings, he came to see that the combination of Lutheran otherworldliness and Barthian despair about this world had made Protestantism in Germany irrelevant in the spheres of industry and politics, and powerless to check the rise of Nazism or to contribute to the solution of the problems of a post-war Europe . . . In the period between the two world wars, the dominant Barthian theology did nothing to help traditional Lutheran pietism to come to grips with the realities of secular social and political life in Germany.'

(Richardson, A., Religion in Contemporary Debate, p.20.)

Bonhoeffer's thought on 'religionless Christianity' is therefore limited by its context, and by his own framework of thinking inherited from Barth. The phrase 'religionless Christianity' has, however, been taken up by a number of more recent writers who use it in a wider and more general sense. The distinction must be maintained between the 'moderately religionless' who wish to change or reduce certain 'religious' activities, and those for whom 'religionlessness' becomes synonymous with the abolition of God[179]. For many, it is used in the former sense, and comes to imply 'institutionless Christianity'. In this sense the interest in 'religionless Christianity' may reflect some of the discontent with large, formal institutions commented on earlier. There have also been calls to 'de-religionize' Christianity. These would seem to be a reflection of the feeling that the Church is irrelevant to modern man, and are thus a product of the concept of man's coming of age. There is also a clear link with the concept of institutional decline, for if there is a feeling that Christianity does not need its institutional forms, then this will tend to remove the constraints on discontinuation of practice[180]. The idea of 'religionless Christianity' in this sense would appear to rest on the assumption that individual faith is of far greater significance and value than the religious structures within which this has traditionally been expressed.

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179 Altizer, T.J.J., and Hamilton, W., Radical Theology and the Death of God, Bobbs-Merrill, 1966, pp.39-40.

180 It is likely that this would only be seen as a reason for discontinuance of practice in a minority of cases.

'Religionless Christianity' as thus understood, may be challenged on a number of grounds. The first rests on the traditional Christian doctrines of sin and grace, and the belief in the 'means of grace' as provided by prayer and communion with God[181], especially within the fellowship of the Church. If, suddenly, this 'religious' support is no longer needed then it is argued this either implies a very radical change in the nature of man and of the Christian life, or contemporary religion may be open to a charge of semi-Pelagianism[182]. Secondly, there is the objection based on the necessity of the discipline of the ordered Christian life, which is dependent upon 'religious' forms and practices[183]. Both of these objections depend upon features of Christian doctrine. The third is more general and arises from the phenomenology of religion. The six dimensions of religion[184] are essentially interrelated. Therefore, the social and ritual dimensions are closely linked with the doctrinal, experiential, mythical and ethical, and it is impossible to completely separate these two sets of dimensions. To threaten the ritual and social dimensions is to challenge something fundamental to religion. Fourthly, a particular problem with a concept such as 'religionless Christianity' is that, with any social institution, certain tendencies are likely to develop whereby the institution itself becomes increasingly important, thus having the effect of drawing attention away from the cause, and onto

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181 Macquarrie, J., God and Secularity, Lutterworth, 1968, p.81.
182 cf. Obayaski, H. op.cit., p.105.
183 Macquarrie, J., op.cit., pp.81-2.
184 These six dimensions represent Smart's classification of the essential elements of religion. cf. Smart, N., The Religious Experience of Mankind, Collins, 1971, pp.15-25.

the institution itself[185]. Therefore, it may be questioned whether a 'religionless Christianity' is in any valid sense ever really possible. Whilst it may not be possible in a literal sense, the challenge which it presents is essentially creative.

> 'A religionless Christianity may strictly be impossible, but a Church which does not transcend its religion in the venture of faith is the Abomination of Desolation standing where it ought not'[186]

'Religionless Christianity' would appear to be a relative rather than an absolute term, and some ways in which the concept may be applied have been considered in the discussion of changes in thinking on the Church, as well as in this section of the chapter.

Conclusion

Theological approaches to secularization inevitably demand different methodology from the sociological approaches, and the selection of certain key theological themes will have demonstrated this difference. The theological approaches, like the sociological, stress the movement of secularization, though it becomes clear in both cases that secularization is not a simple process, as is illustrated for example, by the tension between liberation and dehumanisation. The problem of meaning in religion would appear to

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185 The classic example of this in religion is the Church-sect typology. The sect begins with charisma and fervour, but as it grows and ages, it settles into the established patterns of a Church, with all the concomitant institutional aspects, which only a little earlier would have been rejected. (cf. the works of Troeltsch and Wilson, cited in note 136).

186 Jenkins, Daniel, op.cit., p.79.

be central to the whole secularization process, and the questions of 'God-talk' are of special significance, particularly as attempts at resolution of the inherent problems so quickly lead to negation. This 'crisis of credibility' is an essential part of secularization; were it not for this 'crisis' it is unlikely that other forces of secularization would have had so great an impact. The crisis also raises fundamental questions for worship, and some of these will be discussed in the next section.

Other aspects of the theological approach to secularization would seem to be closely related to each other. There is an evident connection between the concept of man's 'coming of age' and the positive affirmations of the world. Whether man is as mature as he is claimed to be may be a subject for dispute, but the significant element in the contemporary situation is that such maturity is a widely accepted premise, and it is probably this which forms the basis for the new attitudes to the world. These present a challenge to the traditionally world-rejecting views of many religious groups, and link readily with Shiner's category of conformity.

The conformity model may also link with the new understanding of the Church. It is no longer seen as being set over against the world, but as part of it. The diversification of forms of Church organisation (for example, the para-Church) may also be seen as part of the pluriformity of a secular society. Finally, the concept of 'religionless Christianity', which has often been seen as a major feature of secularization whilst being open to question on several grounds, would appear to be a natural theological concomitant of institutional decline.

CHAPTER 5

SOCIOLOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO SECULARIZATION - DISCUSSION.

The diversity of uses of the term 'secularization' in both sociological and theological discourse has been demonstrated above. This variety is to some degree reflected in popular thought as well as in more formal publications.

By use of Shiner's analysis of secularization, as well as by reference to certain key theological concepts, the preceding chapters have attempted to show the complexity and inter-relation of some of the main uses of the term in both disciplines. This wide range of uses of the term 'secularization', sometimes conflicting, sometimes complementary, would seem to suggest that rather than attempting to reach an absolute definition of secularization as a single and simple process, it should be recognised as a syndrome, containing and embracing a number of processes.

Certain meanings of the term would appear to have greater significance than others. One such is the decline theory, which, although difficult to substantiate fully, is an accepted meaning of 'secularization' in popular thought and usage. As was argued in chapter 2, the difficulty with the decline theory lies not so much in the idea of some sort of decline, but in the absoluteness with which such decline is often described. There are several obvious connections between the decline theory and certain theological categories of secularization. Views of the Church are inevitably influenced by the status of that institution in society as a whole. Thus, although Wilson's[1] view of the relationship

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1 cf. Religion in Secular Society, pp.142-54.

between institutional decline and ecumenism has not been accepted[2], it does indicate a more general way one possible relationship between the sociological and the theological aspects. The decline theory can also be related to the theological category of the problems of speaking of God, for if such discourse is increasingly less meaningful, then institutional decline is likely to follow. It would seem, however, that in this case, the sociological aspect may be prior to the theological, for, as will be argued below[3], where the sense of community remains strong, problems of language may seem less acute.

'Conformity with this world' is also an important meaning of secularization, and one which in some ways relates to the literal meaning of the term[4]. The question of ecumenism may also be viewed in the light of this theory, for, as has been argued, changing Church structures, as well as changing theological evaluations of, and attitudes towards the world, clearly overlap with this sociological category. The concepts of 'man come of age' and 'technological man', which represent an acceptance of the status of modern man in this environment, are also in some ways related to this sociological category, inasmuch as they, too, are making positive evaluations of the κοσμος. Fundamental to all these categories is the concept of dedivinization[5], for, in its removal of the boundaries between the spheres of the 'sacred' and the 'secular', it facilitates the developments outlined above. Dedivinization leads not only to a 'rationalisation' and 'reification' of the world, with the removal of the sacral world-views, but also has

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2 cf. discussion of this in ch.4.
3 cf. ch.8.
4 cf. discussion of 'saeculum' etc. in ch.1.
5 cf. ch.3.

major implications for such central religious activities as worship[6]. This, in turn, may again affect the institutional strength of the various Churches. It is also possible to suggest that the loss of a 'numinous' quality about the world may contribute to some of the problems of speaking of God in a secularized society, for dedivinization removes a whole framework of reference which helps to render such language meaningful.

As a process, there would appear to be a certain historical inevitability about secularization. This has been claimed to be inherent both in the nature of Christianity itself[7], and in the nature of secularization as a continuing evolutionary process[8]. The idea of 'process' implies movement in a particular direction; in the case of secularization, this would appear to be a process of a continuing, cyclical nature, rather than being cataclysmic and leading to a definite end. Thus, although the 'secular society' has been described[9], the process of secularization does not necessarily lead to this absolute end, and the phrase 'society undergoing secularization' has been, and will be, used in preference to the more static idea of 'the secular society'. The distinction between 'secularism' and 'secularization' is important and must be maintained.

The question of the relationship between theology and sociology

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6 This theme will be developed in the following section.

7 e.g., van Leeuwen's statement,
'Is not the process of emancipation from religious constraints, which is usually referred to as 'secularization', itself a product of Western Christian civilization, and has it not been set in motion by forces nurtured in the course of Christian history? . . .' (Christianity in World History, p.332).

8 The evolutionary nature of secularization is strongly emphasised by Bellah (op.cit.)

9 Ch.1.

is important and raises a considerable range of issues. In the present context, it will have to be considered very briefly. That there is an inevitable, and close relationship between the two disciplines has been implicitly demonstrated throughout this section. However, while there are evident conceptual links between the sociological and theological approaches to secularization, there remain the important distinctions between them. One significant difference is that of method. Theologians, in using or implying the concept of secularization are more likely to be concerned with component ideas than with attempts to theorise on the total process. Such concern with secularization as a whole is more likely to be the task of the sociologist. As one sociologist states,

> '(the) theological response provides us with data, not concepts . . . the sociologist should not accept uncritically the conscious model of his informants; in the matter of sociology of religion, theologians should be seen as informants, and only as these . . .'[10]

This in some ways implies a very limited view of the role and function of theology, particularly as applied to an area such as secularization, but it does point to one aspect of the distinction between the disciplines.

It might be argued that the difference between sociological and theological approaches to secularization could be attributed to a differ-

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10 Forster, P.G., op.cit., pp.155-6.

ence in the nature of their observations, in that while the sociologist is concerned with the social structures, the theologian is concerned with the ideological structures. This, however, is again too simplistic a view, for, as has been demonstrated throughout this section, there is considerable overlap between the areas of concern of the two dicciplines. It would seem necessary to accept Smith's assumption that,

> 'the world the theologian looks at and the world which the sociologist looks at are one and the same.'[11]

This relates closely to the suggestion that sociology shares a common heritage and common concern with theology, but that different modes of explanation are employed[12]. Thus it is clearly not possible to delineate areas of 'thological' as opposed to 'sociological' concern.

Various types of secularization may also be classified on the basis of the distinction between 'practical' and 'intellectual' secularization[13]. On these grounds, the decline of religious institutions would be seen as practical, and the difficulties of belief in God and the decline of the 'sacral' world-view as intellectual secularization. However, the practical/intellectual categorisation does not in all cases parallel the sociological/theological, but rather, cuts across it. For example, Shiner's transposition theory would have to be classed as intellectual secularization, while much of the theological understanding of the Church and its structures would have to be considered as practical secularization.

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11 Smith, R.G., Bossey Consultation on the Meaning of the Secular, Appendix VII, p.24.

12 cf., Martin, R., 'Sociology and theology', in Whiteley, D.E.H., and Martin, R., (eds), Sociology, Theology and Conflict, Blackwell, 1969, pp.36-7.

13 Hudson, W.D., A Philosophical Approach to Religion, Barnes and Noble, 1974, pp.107-19.

Throughout this section, Shiner's classification of secularization theories has been employed. As stated in the introduction to chapter 2, this method has been adopted for the sake of convenience, in attempting to bring some order to a very wide range of theories, rather than as an expression of agreement with Shiner's views on secularization. The difficulty of following such a scheme too closely is recognised, for there is the constant danger that the apparent simplicity of any such classification may serve to obscure the full complexity of the process it seeks to describe[14].

This section has attempted to describe and evaluate a number of theories and concepts which come under the general heading of 'secularization'. The impossibility of formulating any single definition of the term is recognised, for this would tend to focus undue attention on one aspect of the process at the expense of others, and thus inevitably to exclude some generally accepted and established meaning. For this reason the idea of viewing secularization as a syndrome has been adopted.

Although it is not possible to delineate clear and distinct areas of sociological and theological concern with secularization, the essential difference between the two disciplines would appear to be one of method. This section has considered component parts of the secularization syndrome, and attempted to analyse them individually and their relationship to each other. The sections which follow will be considering the secularization process as a whole, although obviously with some emphasis on particular aspects, and its effects in certain areas of life or society.

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14 cf. Gill, R., op.cit., p.110.

S E C T I O N II

WORSHIP AND SECULARIZATION

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION

The subject of worship and secularization has been selected for consideration for several reasons. Firstly, worship is a readily observable human activity. Whilst it does not follow that changes in forms of, or attitudes to, worship necessarily imply or reflect a theological change which may be classed as secularization, worship represents a more readily identifiable area of change than, for example, personal beliefs and attitudes. Secondly, as will be argued below, worship is essentially a communal activity, and therefore the implications of the social and practical aspects of secularization are more likely to be seen in this area. Thirdly, there are a number of general questions which render worship of importance in secularization discussion. It is these questions which will first be considered.

Worship and secularization

The traditional way of thinking of the sacred and the secular as two distinct spheres has been discussed above[1]. In a society dominated by this approach, the sole link between the two realms was worship, which was seen as a means of entry into the sphere of the holy[2]. If,

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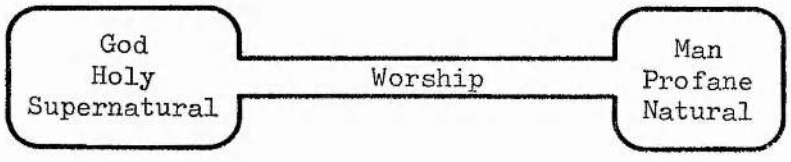
1 cf. ch.3.

2 This has been characterised by J.G. Davies, Every Day God, p.251, in the following diagram:-



There is no N.T. basis for these distinctions. It has frequently been claimed that Jesus broke down the barriers between the two spheres, and thereby the distinction between the assembly of Christians for worship and their life in the world (e.g. Hahn, F., The Worship of the Early Church, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1973, pp.38-9).

however, the contemporary situation is to be described as one in which there is no such division between the sacred and the secular, then either worship must be said to be redundant (a position which will be discussed below) or it must acquire a very different function. These would seem to be the only alternatives if a) the desacralization theory is taken both literally and to its logical conclusion, and b) the primary function of worship is still seen to be to form a bridge between the sacred and the secular. If however, this is seen as an important, but nevertheless secondary function of worship, then there is clearly more place for it.

Whilst it is common to think of 'the sacred' as being separate from 'the secular', some would go further, and claim that worship itself should thus be set apart. It is not always profitable to attempt to distinguish the separateness of the sacred from that of worship, for some, following the idea of worship being the means of access into the sphere of the sacred, use the terms almost interchangeably. For von Allmen[3], the fact that there is Baptism, a Church and a Sunday, shows that it is still necessary to distinguish the sacred from the profane. This contrasts sharply with the statement that,

> '(the) eschatological consciousness is the basis for the rejection of all cult, which is the great theological theme of Hebrews, but it is already widely announced in the gospels, and leaves no room for holy places, holy times, and the cultic boundaries between the privileged people of God and pagans, or between priest and people . .'[4]

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3 von Allmen, J.J., Worship: its Theology and Practice, O.U.P., 1965, p.58.

4 Bornkamm, G., Early Christian Experience, S.C.M., 1969, pp.161-2.

It may be argued that the very existence of physical buildings for the Church denotes that there is something temporal which is distinct, and that it is therefore justifiable to think in terms of separate spheres. But this kind of thinking can create many difficulties, as Bonhoeffer[5] argues, and he therfore sees the 'space' of the Church not as being self-contained, but as 'overlapping' with the space of the world[6].

In this connection it is also possible to regard the process of secularization as having gone full circle, and thus to claim that the sphere of the sacred has undergone such a major shrinkage in recent years that the old unity has been restored, and the idea of worship as a separate area of life has been destroyed[7].

With the exception of the consultations and commissions arising out of the consideration of worship at the 1968 Assembly of the World Council of Churches, comparatively little work has been done on the application of the problems raised by secularization to the concept and practice of worship. Of this lack it has been said,

> 'It could . . . . be that there is so little relation between our secularization discussion groups and the prayer groups because we do not know how to make the connection. In this case, we are like most people involved in rapid change: we share the insights but we do not have the tools and the practical know-how for what a modern day clearly expects of us.'[8]

Whilst there is this lack of specific comment, there have often been more general statements about the implications of secularization for

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5 Ethics.
6 ibid., pp.201-4.
7 Moran, G., 'The theology of secularity; what happened to worship?', Worship in the City of man, XXVII, 1966, p.81.
8 van den Heuvel, A., The Humiliation of the Church, S.C.M., 1966, p.78.

worship. Secularization has been regarded as a threat, although some have recognised its positive value. When secularization is seen in this way it is largely due to the traditional association of the concept of worship with that of the sacral universe. The crisis for worship has been seen as being intensified by the social aspects of secularization[9], and especially by the changes from the close-knit 'village-type' community to multi-polar urban social structures[10]. This change is particularly significant in that it militates against any concept of worship as the activity of a pre-existing community[11]. Essentially, however, this change does not pose a radical threat to worship as such, but only to certain forms and types of worship. Nonetheless, it does mean that worship in its more generally accepted forms is under threat from secularization. It is only if 'the secular' is viewed in rather more negative terms, and the essential separateness of Christians and their worship is stressed, that secularization <u>of itself</u>[12] need imply a total threat to worship[13].

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9 Davies, J.G., 'Secularization and Worship', <u>A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship</u>, S.C.M., 1972, pp.342-4.

10 In the former situation there are a limited number of social contacts, shared by most members of the community. Work, religion, education and leisure are closely related, and the same families are likely to be found in each of these spheres of activity. In the latter situation, the contacts are much more diverse, and there is little overlapping between the sub-groups to which various individuals belong. In this situation it is much more difficult to apply the term 'community'.

11 The way in which much traditional worship assumes this to be the case will be discussed below.

12 A number of aspects of, or results of secularization pose major threats to worship, but the discussion of these is based on rather different assumptions from this rather negative view of secularization

13 e.g. Fraser, J.W., 'Crisis of worship; crisis of faith', <u>Liturgical Review</u>, II (1), 1972, pp.45-59.

The majority of the work in this area was stimulated by the 1966 Assembly of the World Council of Churches, at which one of the Section topics was 'The Worship of God in a Secular Age'. Whilst the critical situation for worship was recognised, there was also an emphasis on the positive potential of secularization.

> 'Secularization, properly understood, can recall us from our distortions to true worship, which affirms the reality of God, of man, and of the world.'[14]

Whilst making this positive assertion, the mood of the Assembly itself veered more in the direction of an acceptance of the crisis situation for worship, and thus it was accepted that,

> 'there is a crisis of worship and behind it a widespread crisis of faith.'[15]

The very inclusion of worship on the agenda of the Assembly in this way in itself indicated the sense of crisis. This was the first time that the subject had appeared on the council agenda; previously it had been discussed at the level of Faith and Order conferences. At the last two of these (1952 and 1963) the main emphasis can be seen to have been on the various Christian traditions of worship, and on the possibility of some rapprochement between them[16]. By 1968, the questions raised were much more radical.

> 'Why pray at all? Of what use is worship? What difference does prayer make? Do not prayer and worship belong to man's dependent infancy?'[17]

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14 W.C.C., Drafts for Sections, 1967, p.98.
15 W.C.C., Report as Adopted by Assembly, 1968, (summary), para.3.
16 Kirby, J.C., 'Worship and Secularization', Worship, XLV, (7), 1971, p.378.
17 W.C.C., Drafts for Sections, 1967, p.96.

Issues which had been peripheral in earlier discussions were now central,

> 'No longer was it a matter of inadequate methods of communicating the Christian understanding of existence, but a crisis in that understanding itself.'[18]

Whilst the answers to the type of questions raised at Uppsala inevitably vary considerably, there would appear to be fairly general agreement that such measures as liturgical revision are no longer adequate to deal with the crisis in worship[19]. The problem is now much more basic. Liturgical revision rarely reaches the root of the problem, and has been described as the

> 'locking of liturgy in a small closed room.'[20]

This is largely because of the tendency of such attempts to be involved with minute historical details of liturgics, and their subsequent lack of any outward looking perspective. Such a perspective is essential to worship in a secularized situation.

Many of the comments mentioned above had about them a note of cautious optimism; they recognised a new situation, and, whilst being fully aware of the problems inherent in it, saw new opportunities, potentially beneficial. But only a few writers have seen great positive advantages for worship in secularization. Panikkar has said that,

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18 Kirby, J.C., op.cit., pp.378-9.

19 e.g., Davis, C., 'Ghetto or desert: liturgy in a cultural dilemma', Studia Litugica, VII (2-3), 1970, p.10. Liturgical revision has been described by van den Heuvel as 'ghetto-cleaning'. (Adler, E., 'Worship in a secular age', Student World, XVI (1), 1963, p.89).

20 Abineno, J.L.C., 'Patterns of liturgy', The South East Journal of Theology, VI, 1964, p.60 (cited by Davies, J.G., Worship and Mission, S.C.M., 1966, p.143).

> '. . . only worship can prevent secularization from becoming inhuman, and only secularization can prevent worship from becoming meaningless.'[21]

This more positive approach to the relationship between worship and secularization will form the basis for the discussion in the rest of this section.

The Concept of Worship

In the present context, the question of the nature and definition of worship naturally arises. It is not practicable or desirable here to enter fully into the complex question of the nature of worship, but certain central issues must be briefly considered.

The lack of clarity in the meaning of the word 'worship' can be seen from the fact that in the New Testament alone there are over thirty cultic expressions (e.g. εὐσέβεια, θεοσέβεια, εὐλάβεια, δεισιδαιμονία, θρησκεία, θεραπεία, διακονία, λειτουργία, δουλεία, λατρεία, δόξα, τιμή, προσκυνητής, etc.[22]).

It has been suggested that cultic terminology is consciously avoided in the N.T. for the description of Christian worship, for it serves only to describe the Temple worship of the O.T., from which the early Christians wished to dissociate their worship[23]. The English word 'worship' has hardly any equivalent in other European languages - whose nearest synonym is probably 'cult'[24]. As used today, worship is a

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21 Panikkar, R., Worship and Secular Man, D.L.T., 1973, p.1.
22 cf. Panikkar, R., 'Secularization and worship', Studia Liturgica, VII (2-3), 1970, p.28.
23 Hahn, F., op.cit., p.36.
24 Panikkar, op.cit., p.29.

generic term covering a wide range of human activities and emotions. It is therefore useful to employ a threefold approach to the understanding of worship, rather than to try to give a precise definition. One or more of these three areas of description is likely to be involved in any statement about worship.

Firstly, there is the emotional aspect of worship. This involves particularly the emotion of awe, often associated with the concept of the numinous[25]. Probably one of the best non-theological examples of the 'awe-type' of worship is to be found in The Wind in the Willows, where Rat and Mole, displaying all the characteristic emotions of worship, approach the august presence of the Piper at the Gates of Dawn[26]. More

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25 The classic description of this is that of R. Otto in his The Idea of the Holy, 1917. He writes of the 'mysterium tremendum', found 'in the lives of those around us, in sudden, strong ebullitions of personal piety and the frames of mind such ebullitions evince, in the fixed and ordered solemnities of rites and liturgies, and again in the atmosphere that clings to old religious monuments and buildings, to temples and to Churches..... The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship... It may burst in sudden eruption up from the depths of the soul with spasms and convulsions, or lead to the strangest excitements... It may become the hushed, trembling and speechless humility of the creature in the presence of - whom or what? In the presence of thatwhich is a mystery inexpressible and above all creatures.' (Penguin edition, 1959, pp.26-7). cf. discussion of the 'sacral universe' in ch.3. of this thesis.

26 Grahame, K., The Wind in the Willows, Methuen, 1908. There are close similarities between the passage concerned and Otto's description quoted above, particularly at the end of the story of the two animals' quest.

'Then suddenly the Mole felt a great Awe fall upon him, an awe that turned his muscles to water, bowed his head, and rooted his feet to the ground. It was no panic terror - indeed he felt wonderfully at peace and happy - but it was an awe that smote and held him and, without seeing, he knew that it could only mean that some august Presence was very, very near. With difficulty he turned to look for his friend, and saw him at his side, cowed, stricken, and trembling violently.' When Mole eventually dared to raise his head to look into the eyes of the Piper, he had a moment of profound insight.

'.....All this he saw, for one moment breathless and intense, vivid on the morning sky; and still, as he looked, he lived, and still, as he lived, he wondered.

'Rat!' he found breath to whisper, shaking, 'Are you afraid?'

formal discussion of the place of awe in worship has been provided by Wilson[27], who has seen it as being of such significance that he can say that,

> 'Worship is simply the institutionalisation of awe.'[28]

Within the broad classification of the emotional side of worship can also be included the expression of values. Traditionally, it might be expected that these should be statements of theological belief, or at least of theologically-based moral values. But worship may also be defined in a much more 'open-ended' way, as

> 'The attitude of one who has singled out certain values as ultimate values, orders his life around them, to serve them in an act of reverence and of fulfilling duties attached to them . . . . Worship begins at the moment when we discover outside, beyond and above ourselves, values that are more important to us than we ourselves are.'[29]

Such a description raises a number of problems, but is immediately possible to see its appropriateness for a secularized society.

It may seem that the emotional aspect of worship is likely to remain fairly constant, in spite of the processes of secularization, because it involves very basic and fundamental human feelings and responses. Although this is probably true to some extent, a major

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26 (cont.)
'Afraid?', murmured the Rat, his eyes shining with unutterable love. 'Afraid! Of Him. O, never, never! And yet ..O Mole, I am afraid!'
Then the two animals, crouching to the earch, bowed their heads and did worship.' (pp.161-3) It is interesting to note that this was written nearly ten years before Otto's description of mysterium tremendum.

27 Wilson, J., Education in Religion and the Emotions, Heinemann, 1971, pp.42-55 and 206-16.

28 Wilson, J., Religion, Heinemann, 1972, p.115.

29 Bloom, Metropolitan Antony, 'Worship in a secular society', Studia Liturgica, VII (2-3), 1970, p.120.

difficulty must be the object of worship. The very concept of worship implies that there should be an object, and if awe is seen as a central aspect of the emotional side of worship, as has been suggested above, this is re-inforced, for awe too, requires an appropriate object[30]. Yet in a society undergoing secularization, the question of the object of worship is of crucial importance. If the concept of God appears to many either to be no longer meaningful or to have little relevance[31], then, with such a 'crisis of credibility', how can worship itself have any meaning[32]? The 'death-of-God' writers gave little space to comments on worship; in one way this was a natural result of their radical theology, although the status ascribed to Christ in some of these writings might have been expected to lead to a discussion of the appropriate communal emotional responses.

The use of the language of God in worship has been seen as one of the most vital problems to which the Church must address itself.

> 'It is invevitable that reflections upon worship ultimately lead to the question of God. What does it mean today to say 'God' within the setting of the Christian tradtion? . . In relation to worship this question is hardly ever raised theologically, but is nevertheless present existentially. Until we seek to clear up this point, our discussion of worship has no sound basis. . . What is the content of worship? Is the experience of God the experience which is or which must be made in worship ..?'[33]

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30 cf. Wilson, J., op.cit., pp.108-15.

31 cf. discussion of this in ch.4.

32 If worship has traditionally only existed because the idea of God was universally accepted, then clearly worship is not a viable activity when this belief is not generally held. If, however, worship is regarded as a more fundamental human activity, and having God as its object, then the end of worship need not necessarily be assumed.

33 W.C.C. Faith and Order Consultation, 'Worship in secular age', Studia Liturgica, VII (4), 1970, p.37.

This question focusses on the centrality of the question of God for the problem of worship. The underlying crisis of faith had been seen at Uppsala to be the root of the crisis of worship. If this is a true diagnosis of the situation, the lack of certainty felt by many about their beliefs must mean that they are worshipping hopefully, 'as if God were there', rather than in the absolute certainty of his presence. This must involve a modification of worship to take account of this more tentative element. In this situation, the question which must be asked is whether it is possible for a person who does not believe in God to worship? Whilst it is not envisaged that there would be large numbers of 'militant atheists' wishing to participate in Church services, the reality of this question is evidenced by the continuance in roles involving worship of a number of those associated with the 'death of God' and others in similarly contradictory positions. In the light of Bloom's definition of worship quoted above, it is clearly possible for the non-believer to worship. The 'committed unbelievers' described by Brown[34] were part of a worshipping community. It is likely that there are many who find within the activity of worship something valuable, with which they wish to associate closely, and yet whose object, on intellectual or emotional grounds they cannot accept. It may well be that 'man come of age' is still fundamentally a worshipping creature, and the right of the Church to assume that worship is the prerogative of believers must be questioned. A Church which is engaging in relevant activities and expressing widely-felt concerns in its worship may well draw to itself people of a wide variety of credal positions. It is worship under these circumstances which may be classed as one of the meanings of 'secular worship'. This is,

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34 Brown, F., Living Before you Die, S.C.M., 1973, pp.11-26. The description was of students at Queen's College, Birmingham.

> '. . an attitude which shares certain characteristics with literal religious worship, but which is not directed towards any reality, transcendent or mundane, overtly or by implication. The verb 'to worship' is here used in an intransitive sense. It consists in the cultivation and the expression of certain attitudes and habits of mind such as reverence, trustfulness, joy or a meditative attitude towards life . . '[35]

The second aspect of worship may be described as the 'cultic'. The cultic, ritual or liturgical aspect of worship is often spoken of as though it were worship itself. This, however, can be misleading, and it would seem that the distinction between liturgy and worship must be maintained. There is a variety of views on the relationship between the two, but in very general terms it can be said that liturgy may be regarded as a vehicle for worship. Furthermore, while the emotional side of worship is essentially an individual experience or response, liturgy is basically communal, and is,

> 'that worship which is officially organised by the Church, and which is open to, and offered by, or in, the name of all who are members of the Church.'[36]

Thus far, the description of liturgy as the ritual or activity of an organised religious service is fairly straightforward. The problem arises in seeking a closer definition, for whilst some activities or written forms are clearly recognisable as liturgies, others are much less clear. There can be little doubt, for example, that the 'Order for Morning Prayer' of the Church of England[37] constitutes

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35 Hull, J., School Worship: an Obituary, S.C.M., 1974, p.43.
36 Dix, G., The Shape of the Liturgy, Dacre Press, 1945, p.1.
37 Book of Common Prayer, Clowes, 1662. The service is clearly structured and has a well-defined pattern of exhortations and responses.

a liturgy, but with modern and freer forms of worship, one must ask whether it is possible to classify some activities as being liturgical and others as not, or whether all that goes on within the context of an 'act of worship' thus becomes the liturgy? λειτουργία in its classical sense had the general meaning of a duty or service to the gods or to other people[38]. There are various possible contemporary uses for the term, including the Eucharist, prescribed services of the Church, corporate worship, any authorised service book, any type of service conducted according to a fixed formula and those parts of the service which precede and follow the sermon[39]. Generally, however, it is taken today to denote some set form of worship[40]. Although all Christian bodies have some form of liturgy, attitudes towards it vary considerably, and are influenced by a variety of factors.

> 'A Christian's attitude toward liturgy is determined by his view of the Church. For liturgy is the way in which the Christian society functions when it meets to propagate its faith and worship its God. If he holds a low view of the Church, he will have a utilitarian view of the liturgy . . . If he holds a high view of the Church, he will have a supernatural view of the liturgy. . . . But if he regards the Church as in any real sense the body of Christ, then he will view the liturgy as an activity of the Christ himself . . . '[41]

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38 Liddell, H.G., and Scott, R., Greek-English Lexicon, O.U.P., 1869, list three main meanings,
a) At Athens, a burdensome public duty or charge, which the richer citizens did at their own expense,
b) any service or work of a public kind,
c) the public service of the gods, the service or ministry of priests.

39 W.C.C. Faith and Order Conference, Montreal, 1963, Report on worship, p.16.

40 In the Orthodox Churches its use is very specific and applies solely to the Eucharist.

41 Couratin, A.H., 'Liturgy', in Danielou, J., Couratin, A.H., and Kent, J., Historical Theology, Penguin, 1969, p.133.

In addition to these theological considerations, social factors are also significant, for there is sometimes an ingrained suspicion of the very term 'liturgy' as representing something alien. This is found particularly in various Free Church traditions, and may often be due to a misunderstanding of the concept of 'set' prayers and forms of worship[42].

A further use of the word 'liturgy' is to be found in the context of discussion of 'liturgical renewal'. In many cases this basically refers to the rewording or restructuring of an established order of service, and, as has been suggested above, such superficial revisions are rarely adequate to the contemporary crisis of worship. More radical changes in worship are therefore often sought, and it has already been implied that there may be a point at which such experimental forms of service may cease to merit the term 'liturgy'. This question of what realy constitutes liturgy becomes increasingly pertinent with the rise of 'informal' worship. On the whole, it would seem that the term should continue to be open to a wide range of uses, so long as this diversity is recognised, and the association with a particular set form of worship does not dominate thinking on the subject.

The issues arising with the use of the term 'liturgy' can be seen at a more basic level with questions of ritual. Ritual of some sort is to be found in all societies from the most primitive upwards. In many cases these will be of basically agricultural significance[43]. Their

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42 cf. Taylor, M., Variations on a Theme, Galliard, 1973, pp.44-5.

43 cf. von Allmen J.J. (ed), The Vocabulary of the Bible, Lutterworth, 1958 p.471,

'Almost everywhere similar rites of initiation and purification are practised; agrarian cults are celebrated according to the same pattern; and, at the time of solemn festivals, the faithful dramatise the same struggle between the forces of light and the forces of chaos.'

function may be more social and psychological, in that they provide a sense of security for the individual as well as for the community, and help to recreate emotions in various contexts[44]. Ritual has been defined as,

> 'a stereotyped, symbolically concentrated expression of beliefs and sentiments regarding ultimate things. It is a way of renewing contact with ultimate things, of bringing them more vividly to mind through symbolic performances.'[45]

Even in the most 'free' forms of worship there is normally some kind of underlying structure, with certain activities, often regularly repeated, which may loosely be described as ritual. If such structure is lacking at the outset, such forms soon develop,

> 'As the sect worships Sunday after Sunday, its members notice that certain arrangements are more satisfying than others, and it is no wonder that they are selected for retention and repetition, or at least, for frequent re-enactment.'[46]

Even the Quaker meeting has, for its members if not for its observers, a certain element of ritual. In other traditions, the very fact of a large number coming together under the leadership of one or more people demands not only that certain things will be done during that hour, but also that there is some pattern, albeit flexible, to those

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44 e.g. 'the recurrence of the ritual assures them that the feeling once was there and may come back again. That is, of course, the principal function of the rituals of family relationships . . and all of those ceremonies where we attempt to reconstitute ritually a feeling that exists but that may lack any immediate power of expression. It is a . . function of ritual the world over.' (Mead, M., 'Ritual expression of the cosmic sense', Worship, XL, (2), 1966, p.71).

45 Shils, E., 'Ritual and crisis', in Cutler, D., (ed), The Religious Situation, 1968, Boston, 1968, p.735.

46 Stark, W., The Sociology of Religion, R.K.P., Vol.2, 1966, p.310.

activities, so that a proportion of the participants may know what to expect. There must be at least this minimum of order so that the emotional side of worship may take place.

> 'The intelligent and effective ordering of worship demands services with a shape and recognizable forms of words.'[47]

Thirdly, there is the communal aspect of worship. Whilst this aspect is not often stressed, it is frequently implied. Worship is not something done in isolation; whilst fresh developments and insights may come from individuals, if that vision is to have any impact on life it must be passed on to the community at large through some corporate religious activity[48]. In the N.T. the 'coming together' of Christians is the significant feature of worship, and hence the only terms that occur with regularity are συνέρχεσθαι and συνεργεσθαι[49]. Liturgies and rituals as described above require for their very existence a group of people to participate. Moreover, the very wording and structure of many liturgies implies that this should not just be a random collection of people, but that the worshipping congregation should be a pre-existing community. This concept is at the heart of the parish structure. It is possible to take the idea of community further, and say that the liturgical acts are a means of a group of people expressing the fact that they are a community. This has been stated in more basic terms by Durkheim, who says that,

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47 Jasper, R.C.D., The Renewal of Worship, O.U.P., 1965, p.9.
48 Garrett, T.S., Christian Worship, O.U.P., 1961, p.6.
49 cf. Hahn, F., op.cit., p.36. The use of these terms may be found in 1 Cor.11:17,20,33-4; 14:23,26; 1g. Eph.13:1; Acts 4:31, 20:7-8; 14:27; 15:6, etc.

> 'before all, rites are means by which the social group reaffirms itself periodically.'[50]

This communal aspect is central to Davies' definition of worship as,

> 'that which celebrates, expresses and/or actualizes community or fellowship, and makes explicit a relationship to that which is of ultimate concern, viz. with the holy as embodied in Christ.'[51]

An examination of many hymns, particularly from the English Free Church tradition, will reveal that many of them are expressing or celebrating this fellowship, or offering praise and thanks that another opportunity for meeting has been provided[52]. Even in those hymns which do not make such explicit reference to the 'fellowship' of worship, the frequent use of the first person plural pronoun is evocative of similar ideas.

Whilst the three aspects of worship described above, the emotional, the ritual, and the communal, provide a useful framework for thinking about worship, they cannot be exclusive. For there will always be valid statements about worship which cannot be fitted into such categories. An example of this is the statement that,

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50 Durkheim, E., The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, Allen and Unwin, 1954, p.387.

51 Davies, J.G., Every Day God, p.316.

52 e.g. 'And are we yet alive,
To see each other's face?' (C. Wesley)
'Why hast thou cast our lot
In the same age and place,
And why together brought
To see each other's face;' (C. Wesley)
'Jesus, united by thy grace,
And each to each endeared..' (C. Wesley)
'All praise to our redeeming Lord,
Who joins us by his grace..
He bids us build each other up;
And gathered into one...
Even now we think and speak the same
And cordially agree..' (C. Wesley)
'O God our Father, who dost make us one..' (W.V. Jenkins)
(a selection of examples from The Methodist Hymn Book, Methodist Conference Office, 1933.)

'To live in the world as a Christian - that is worship.'[53]

Whilst an attempt could be made to fit this into the first of the three categories, it would be a distortion to do so. A further aspect of worship which it is difficult to classify in this way is the effect which worship may have upon the worshipper. If the effect is merely one of confirming and strengthening an emotion which is already felt by him, then obviously this belongs to the emotional aspect. If, on the other hand, the effect of worship is to <u>disturb</u> the worshipper into some new pattern of thought action or commitment, or to protest against or challenge the status quo[54], then there is here a dimension which transcends the narrow framework of the emotional/ritual/communal description.

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53 Muller, K.F., 'Living Worship', <u>Studia Liturgica</u>, VII (2-3), 1970, p.86.

54 cf. W.C.C., <u>The Uppsala Report</u>, Geneva, 1968, p.75. This report sees this disturbing factor as vital.

CHAPTER 7

THE PLACE OF WORSHIP IN A SECULARIZED SOCIETY

Introduction

Whatever view is held of the real nature of worship, and whatever function is seen for various liturgical forms and rituals, some may argue that the whole activity of worship is anachronistic and irrelevant in a secularized society[1]. It is this question which must now be considered, is there any place for worship in such a society either in the present or in the future?

Answers to this question will vary widely, and will, in part, be influenced by the views of worship held, as well as by the levels of commitment to particular worshipping traditions of those responding. Views of man and of society will also influence such responses. However, in general terms, answers to this question can be grouped under the headings of,

a) positive affirmations of the continuing value of worship,
b) the denial of any future for worship,
c) acceptance of a continuing, but modified or altered role for worship.

Affirmations of the continuing value of worship

Firstly, there is the unquestioning acceptance of the continuing value and place of worship. Many assume that there is such a place, and the very existence of the literature witnesses to the assumption of the

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1 As indicated in Section 1, the expression 'secularized society' is employed here to avoid the static and absolute connotations of the term 'secular society'.

continuance of worship. This is also shown by the constant interest in new forms of liturgy[2]. Many of the W.C.C. discussions already cited similarly take for granted that there is a future for worship.

> 'Although worship in its traditional form is called in question, worship itself is not.'[3]

At the heart of many views of worship lies the concept of celebration, and the continuance of worship may be said to be to some extent dependent on the place of celebration in society. Celebration has been defined as,

> 'the ritual dignification of the peak experiences of life'[4]

The fact that celebration seems to be a basic human instinct has often been used as an argument for the continuance of worship. Celebration can be seen to exist at all levels of human experience from a children's birthday party to a national celebration on the scale of a coronation or royal wedding. Even simple celebrations within a family (such as a special meal) or for the individual (such as wearing new clothes) have about them the same essential quality of the break with the ordinary and the mundane. Whilst much of what goes on in various liturgies today bears little or no resemblance to celebration, celebration is, nevertheless, at the heart of worship[5]. Celebration has been described as having the following characteristics,

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2 cf. Hollenweger, W.J., 'Experimental forms of worship', in Davies, J.G., (ed), A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship, S.C.M., 1972, p.176.

3 W.C.C. Faith and Order Consultation, 'Worship in a secular age', Studia Liturgica, VII (4), 1972, p.28.

4 Hull, J., op.cit., p.39.

5 This is especially true of the Eucharist, of which the term 'celebration' is frequently used.

i) It is exceptional,
ii) It is superabundant,
iii) It is linked to a value or event of especial importance,
iv) It is a phenomenon of love, joy, unanimity and participation,
v) It has reference to time past, present and future,
vi) It involves both order and spontaneity,
vii) It involves sacrifice,
viii) It is a symbolic action and is concerned with meaning[6].

If true celebration is to have most or all of these aspects, it is difficult to conceive of it not being, in some sense, religious, and thus involving essentially, if not apparently, worship. The implications of this concept of celebration appear in a number of ways. It is interesting that, despite his earlier, pessimistic view of the worshipping potential of modern man[7], Cox has been one of the more forceful advocates of the continuing significance of celebration, stating,

> 'When festivity disappears from a culture, something universally human is endangered.'[8]

Just as worship requires an object, so does celebration; there has to be something to be celebrated. It is here that worship and celebration are especially closely linked, for in Christian worship, it is usually some aspect of divine activity that is being celebrated. In this connection it has been stressed that the celebration occurring in worship should not only be a celebration of God, but also a celebration of humanity before God[9], and that,

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6 Debuyst, F., 'Feast days and festive celebrations: foretastes of full communion', Concilium, IX (4), 1958, pp.5-9; Modern Architecture and Christian Celebration, Lutterworth, 1968, pp.9-19, and Cox, H., The Feast of Fools, Harvard Univ. Press, 1969, pp.21-6.
7 Cox, H., The Secular City.
8 The Feast of Fools, p.11.
9 Brown, F., Living Before You Die, pp.77-93.

'worship of God should also be the celebration of personal significance.'[10]

Without this dimension, it is argued, the celebration in worship is likely to become remote and unconnected with everyday life[11].

If, then, it can be argued that celebration and worship are closely and essentially linked, and if celebration is something which is fundamental in human nature, then it would follow on this argument that it is unlikely that there will not continue to be a place in human society for worship. These arguments have stressed the human aspects of worship, there is also the argument that worship must continue because it is man's unchanging duty to God. This occurs liturgically in the communion prayer,

'It is very meet, right and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places, give thanks unto thee. . '[12]

This argument for worship is unequivocal and absolute. The idea of duty as a motivation for worship will be considered further below.

The denial of any place for worship in a secularized society

The second type of response is in the negative, and is exemplified by the question,

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10 ibid., p.80.
11 The relationship of worship to everyday life will be considered further in the next chapter.
12 Book of Common Prayer.

> 'may not the liturgical act, and with it all that we mean by liturgy, be so historically conditioned - ancient, medieval or baroque - that for the sake of sincerity we have to abandon it completely? Should we not by now have realised that the man of the industrial age, of technology and the social structures fashioned by it, is no longer capable of the liturgical act . . .?'[13]

This argument is dependent on the condition of man, who is said to be no longer capable of worship. Others have denied a future for worship on the grounds that the activity itself is outmoded, thus rendering any talk of modern forms of worship or of liturgical revision meaningless[14]. It has also been suggested that some aspects of contemporary theology may render prayer and worship redundant[15].

On the whole, however, such outright and absolute denials of the place for worship are few. This depends to a large extent on maintaining a distinction between secularization and secularism, for whilst there are few such denials with secularization, there are much greater problems for worship with secularism,

> 'Secularism. . .is above all a negation of worship. . . (it) consists in the rejection, explicit or implicit, of precisely that idea of man and the world which it is the very purpose of worship to express and to communicate. .'[16]

Although such strong denials are infrequent there are ready

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13 Guardini, R., in a statement at the Mainz Liturgical Congress, quoted by Vajta, V., 'Worship in a secularized age', Studia Liturgica, VII (2-3), 1970, p.73.

14 cf. Davis, C., op.cit., p.11.

15 e.g. Kysar, R., 'Toward a Christian humanism', The Christian Century, May 21st, 1969,
'The affirmation of the ultimate significance of human existence and denial of traditional concepts of transcendence necessarily imply that prayer must be rethought or dispensed with . .'
(quoted in Hoon, P., The Integrity of Worship, Abingdon Press, 1971, p.255)

16 Schemann, A, For the Life of the World, Sacraments and Orthodoxy, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973, pp.118 and 124.

arguments against the continuance of worship as understood according to many traditional concepts. If desacralization is occurring, to a greater or lesser extent, then many of the traditional concepts of worship, which were based on the idea of a sacral universe, must have lost their validity. There can be little place for worship conceived as a drawing apart from the world to an encounter with the other-worldly[17] in a secularized society.

A continuing, but modified place for worship in a secularized society

It is not logically, or perhaps, emotionally possible for many completely to deny a place for worship in a secularized society. It is, therefore, the third position, that of recognising for worship a continuing, but perhaps modified role, which is taken in the majority of cases. This position acknowledges the problems for the continuance of worship, but tends to see them in positive, rather than negative terms. A few key issues will be outlined here, and their implications discussed in the following chapter.

In such a situation, there is a fundamental cultural problem for worship, and the alternatives have been characterised in terms of the 'ghetto' and the 'desert'[18]. If the Church is to retain sufficient of its own culture to make worship viable, then its position in relation to the prevailing culture of society will be that of the ghetto. The 'desert' analogy refers to the fact that Christians are between two worlds as far as any cultural expression of their faith and worship is

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17 For a discussion of the dependence of traditional worship on the concept of the sacral universe cf. Davies, J.G., Every Day God, pp.244-54.

18 Davis, C., Studia Liturgica, VII (2-3), 1970, pp.10-27. Although the distinction he makes is useful, the two categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

concerned, thus being left without any appropriate cultural forms. Thus there arises a great difficulty in finding any appropriate mode of expression of worship[19]. Whilst Davis' analysis of these alternatives provides a useful structure for argument, it may be challenged in that it is dependent on a particular understanding of 'the holy', and because it appears to assume that there ever was such a thing as a 'Christian culture'[20]. It is on the existence of this culture that the ghetto/desert analysis rests.

If the first problem may be described as cultural, the second may be termed social. Public worship is traditionally restricted within the pattern of social and economic life. An obvious example of this social problem is the place of Sunday in a basically industrial society. Sunday, celebrated as the day of the resurrection and fulfilling the Jewish Sabbath, holds profound theological and archetypal meanings[21]. Whilst the early Church regarded Sunday primarily in Eucharistic terms, the Council of Elvira in 306 called upon Christians to abstain from work on Sundays, and this was confirmed at the Council of Laodicea in 380. Sunday was ordered to be a public holiday by Constantine in 321, with no apparent reference to Christian ideals[22]. Thus, the Church began to recognise Sunday as a day of rest, rather than just as a day of worship at a time when the church was gaining status in society, and was no longer merely regarded as a sect[23]. Thus, Sunday

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19 Whilst Davis seems to prefer the 'desert' to the 'ghetto', in his discussion of the situation its practical implications tend to become very much like those of the ghetto.

20 cf. Davies, J.G., op.cit., pp.253-5.

21 Hoon, P., op.cit., p.258.

22 Rordorf, W., Sunday, S.C.M., 1968, pp.154-62.

23 Pickering, W.S.F., 'The secularized sabbath: formerly Sunday: now the weekend', A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain, V, 1972, p.34.

became set apart, and viewed as 'the Sabbath', a trend which reached its climax with the Puritanism of the 17th century. The demands of shift work, the growth of the idea of 'the weekend', and the general view of Sunday as a day of well-earned leisure[24] in Britain, as well as the complete disappearance of Sunday as a day of rest in some Eastern European countries[25], all have profound implications for the continuance of worship. But however disturbing these changes in the use of Sunday may be to some, they would appear to pose a threat not to worship intself, but only to certain accepted patterns of worship.

The day of worship is closely related to the social structures within which worship occurs. The significance of the communal aspect of worship was outlined in the last chapter. Traditionally, the social structure was the parish system. The majority of people lived, worked, and had their education and leisure within the parish. Thus, when they met together for worship, they did so as a well-defined community. Today, in many rural as well as urban situations, the parish has little meaning in any community sense. This is due to many factors, including increased mobility, and the diversity of the social network relationships, which are multi-polar rather than of the close-knit village type. Thus it may be argued that the place of work, for example, has potentially more meaning than the residential parish as a possible context for worship, although there are obvious dangers of introversion if narrow groups become the main communities for worship[26], because they cannot relate to many wider issues or to the family[27]. Again, the fact that

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24 ibid., pp.39-40.
25 van den Heuvel, A., op.cit., pp.89-90.
26 Nowell, R., 'Liturgy in the secular city', The Month, V (8), 1972, p.244.
27 The question of the family emphasis in worship will be discussed in ch.8.

the parish setting of worship may in some cases be redundant is not in itself an argument for the redundancy of worship, but only of certain traditional forms thereof.

A third fundamental issue is the motivation of worship. This is basic to any understanding of why worship should continue[28]. Although there are various Biblical injunctions concerning the performance of certain specific acts of worship[29], there is no general command to worship as such[30]. It would appear that even the keeping of the Sabbath began as a humane practice rather than as a cultic one[31]. From the early centuries of the Christian Church, however, duty has been made a strong motivation for worship. Even before persecution had ended, the Synod of Elvira had threatened with excommunication all those who failed to attend worship for three Sundays running[32]. This emphasis on duty continued, and is to be found in the phraseology of the Book of Common Prayer[33]. Against this background, it may be claimed that one aspect of the maturity of modern man is his freedom from arbitrary authorities,

> 'for the Church to advocate worship primarily on the ground that it is one's duty is simply to forget that duty has very little meaning to many people today.'[34]

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28 White, J.F., The Worldliness of Worship, O.U.P., New York, 1967, pp.3-4.

29 e.g., the rules for the keeping of the Passover, Ex.12.

30 There would seem to be a general assumption that there would be some sort of worship, hence the injunctions in the Decalogue against worship of the wrong Gods and against the wrong forms of the worship of Yahweh (Ex.20:3-6).

31 i.e. for ensuring that all workers had a regular period of rest. This humanitarian motive is brought out in Deut.5:14.

32 White, J.F., op.cit., p.5.

33 '. .it is meet, right and our bounden duty . . .'

34 White, J.F., op.cit., p.8.

Duty is also less likely to have meaning when attendance at worship is a minority activity. As will be argued below, there should be a reasonableness about worship which justifies it on grounds other than duty.

Another former motivation for worship was guilt. This seems to have been based on the idea that the individual either felt, or ought to feel, guilty, and thus in need of cleansing by worship[35]. Many services, particularly within the evangelical tradition, still do much to build up this feeling of guilt. The language of the General Confession,

'. . . there is no health in us . . . miserable offenders'[36]

acts in the same way. This guilt motive is related to a basic view of man as not only sinful, but also inadequate. If, however, modern man does not share the earlier feelings of inferiority, and of the threat of eternal punishment, then the assumption that guilt will lead people to want to worship must be challenged[37]. Whatever view is held of man's 'coming of age', he has certainly greatly enlarged the areas of his control in recent years. Yet much in traditional worship insists on the helplessness of man[38], and this is reinforced particularly in prayers which do not take,

'account of men as responsible agents in effecting the will of God.'[39]

In a secularized society, where a more positive view of the place

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35 Kent, J.H.S., 'The psychology of worship', London Quarterly, CLXXXIX, 1964, p.54.

36 Book of Common Prayer.

37 This, of course, refers to a general sense of guilt as a motivation for regular worship. It does not affect the likelihood of individuals turning to the Church at particular times of personal crisis or individual guilt.

38 e.g., the Collect for the ninth Sunday after Trinity, Book of Common Prayer.

39 Stevisk, D.B. Language in Worship; Reflections on a Crisis, Seabury Press, New York, 1970, p.84.

of man is held[40], the basis for legitimation of worship will be voluntary, and totally removed from the legalism of earlier centuries. The implication here again is that worship must justify itself as a worthwhile activity, and not expect to be able to claim people's participation as a right.

In a society undergoing secularization, these traditional contexts of, and motivations for, worship are likely to be radically altered. Thus, the question of the culture of worship is one which is, to a large extent, accentuated by the various processes of secularization. For example, the culture of worship would be a problem in any case in a technological, urban society, but these difficulties are probably increased by the problems of the language of God and by the lack of a natural community of worshippers. Similarly, as worship becomes increasingly a minority activity, the question of the time and place of worship acquires a new significance, as more fundamental questions come to be asked about traditionally accepted values. The same questions are raised, even more pertinently, in the case of the motivation of worship. It is against the background of these 'modifying' factors in worship that the next chapter will attempt to consider some characteristics of worship in a secularized society.

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40 cf. ch.4.

CHAPTER 8

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF WORSHIP IN A SECULARIZED SOCIETY

It has been argued that there are a number of responses to the question of whether there is a place for worship in a secularized society, and concluded that it is generally felt that worship in some form is likely to survive. It is therefore necessary to consider some of the characteristics which might be expected of worship which is attempting to be valid and viable in this situation.

The relevance of worship

The most significant characteristic, which is in a sense fundamental to all the others, is that of relevance. Pleas for relevance are frequently found in contemporary liturgical literature, and may take many forms. A common form of this relevance may be described as 'world-orientation', so that worship may be concerned with and reflect the world as it is.

There can be many types of 'world-orientation'. There is a frequent stress on the need for liturgy to reflect the ordinariness of life instead of representing the separateness of the sacred and the secular. Thus,

> 'Too much of our . . .Church life is strictly 'out of this world' not in a proper eschatological sense, but in an unrelated sense. So much of our Sunday worship, our pastoral prayers, our hymns and anthems, our pulpit homilies, our vested choirs and divided chancels, our processing and recessing . . . is simply unrelated to reality . . and were it not so soporific and hypnotic it would not be tolerated by people who otherwise are very much in the world.'[1]

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1 Kerr, H.T., 'In but not of the world', Theology Today, XV, 1958, p.295

Liturgical forms which seek to render worship more relevant in this way have to be seen in the light of certain fundamental questions. For example, what is really meant by such a statement as,

> 'Worship must not be divorced from the world . . (it) can only fulfil its function when it consciously takes place in the world.'[2]?

At one level, this would seem to be a statement of the absurdly obvious, for clearly, in a literal sense, worship always takes place in the world, and is always human. However, it would also appear to be an argument for the recognition of worship as an essentially human activity, and that the ordinary affairs of human life should not be thought unworthy of a place in worship. This, however, may be seen as one of the main dangers of the concern for relevance, in that by stressing the 'humanness' of worship, and by bringing into worship 'mundane' interests, there may come a point at which it ceases to be 'worship' in any of the senses outlined in ch.6. Such an argument may be countered by Davies' view that the place of encounter with the holy is the most ordinary of everyday situations[3]. He claims that it is only by taking the secular world seriously that there is any possibility of a renewal of worship[4]. Indeed, this worldliness of worship may be argued to be inevitable[5], its basis lying in the nature of God,

> 'worship is worldly because God is'.[6]

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2 W.C.C. Faith and Order consultation, 1969, Studia Liturgica, VII (4), 1970, pp.32-3.
3 Every Day God, part 1, esp. pp.76-110.
4 ibid., pp.257-9.
5 White, J.F., op.cit., pp.79-91.
6 ibid., p.86.

Moreover, the world itself, in which worship occurs, must be seen as 'worldly' in its own right, and not submerged into the sacred. It is thus only by reflecting the true nature of the world that worship can be genuine.

> 'worship preserves the world's worldliness by repudiating any self-contained semblance of the world which would negative the world's progress, and by affirming its openness as God's mystery.'[7]

Any denial of the truly worldly nature of worship may be seen as rendering authentic liturgical action impossible[8]. The very fact that worship is performed in the 'profane' context of the world helps to pròvide the correct perspective on the whole God-man-world relationship. In a desacralised situation, the recognition of this essential 'worldliness' would seem to be imperative. Without it, there may be great artificiality.

Whilst relevance is an important criterion of worship in a secularized society, there is inevitably a tension between relevance and permanence, for,

> 'any real reformation of worship must take into account the spirit of the age so that our forms of expression are relevant to our society and not one that is past; but if worship has to do with the communion of man and God at the deepest levels of existence, then there is obviously a central element in it that remains from age to age.'[9]

There would, nevertheless, seem to be three elements of relevance that are of particular significance. These are the humanising aspects of worship, its ordinariness, and a sensitivity to the world.

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7 Vajta, V., op.cit., p.75.
8 cf. Hoon, P., op.cit., p.332.
9 Read, D.H.C., 'The reformation of worship', Scottish Journal of Theology, VIII (1), 1955, p.66.

The humanising aspect of worship may be seen as a two-way process having its effect on worship as well as on the worshipper. This is the basis of Panikkar's statement that,

> 'worship has to permeate human life once again, and render it more meaningful, enhancing the significance of those acts, and also giving the necessary strength (grace) for one to live up to the demands of such a human calling.'[10]

In order for this two-way process to begin, worship must first be removed from its 'sacred' confines, and brought consciously into the world in which it occurs. This humanising will thus also have an effect upon the worshippers, having a real relevance for all involved, and it has been argued that for real celebration to occur, liturgy must be humanised to the extent that it is,

> 'an event of the whole people of God, and even of those who believe they do not believe.'[11]

There is, secondly, a certain ordinariness which may be expected of worship in a secular society. Although it has been argued above that the key aspects of the concept of celebration include 'specialness' and 'difference', it is probably true to say that much in traditional worship has become too different and thus remote and irrelevant. The special language, dress and ornaments of an earlier age are now remote and thus, in many cases, meaningless, or even have about them an element of superstition[12]. The meaningful tension of the 'special within the ordinary' has often been lost, so that worship becomes alienated from

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10 Worship and Secular Man, p.59.

11 Hollenweger, W.J., 'Experimental forms of worship', in A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship, S.C.M., 1972, p.177.

12 e.g. the belief that a service is not valid if the celebrant is not wearing appropriate clerical dress.

the world.

> '. . The setting of the Church's liturgy explicitly disjoins the sacred from the secular. Occasional worshippers, upon entering a Church to take part in a service, display mental and emotional discomfort rather than interest and anticipation . . . Regular worshippers often show signs of alienation from normal human behaviour . .'[13]

The 'ordinariness' which may be expected refers not only to the attitudes of the worshippers, but also that in a secularized society, worship is likely to use essentially ordinary materials for its liturgical buildings and activities. This can take a variety of forms; sometimes being a conscious attempt to return to the practices of the Early Church[14], where worship was essentially ordinary and related to everyday life because it was practised in private homes. Sometimes the ordinariness is emphasised by the use of household food and drink in the Eucharist[15].

The concern for the ordinary goes beyond the level of liturgical materials, to its whole language and interests.

> 'Look at our psalms and hymns! Not a word about cars, bridges, housing projects, motorways or power plants. In the worship of the Christian Church, modern society stands implicitly judged; it is not good enough to

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13 Tytler, D., 'Story and liturgy', in Vincent, J., (ed), Stirrings; Essays Christian and Radical, Epworth, 1976, p.91.

14 cf. the experiments described in Robinson, J.A.T., Liturgy Coming to Life, Mowbray, 1960. It is perhaps significant that these occurred within the very closely-defined community of a Cambridge college.

15 cf. Davies, J.G., 'The reality of worship', Church Service Society Annual, XXVIII, 1968, pp.3-13. In some situations the integration of 'everday' elements into worship is easier than in others. The Abbey services at Iona, for example, use bread from the Abbey and the Youth Camp, and to these the remainder returns,
'to be used at the ordinary meal - or to remind us that no meal is ordinary' (The Abbey Services of the Iona Community, p.19).

> provide the metaphors of liturgical language. Sermons and educational methods are doomed to fail when they clash with the liturgical practice of the community.'[16]

The implication of the last part of this statement is a general concern for, and interest in social, political and technological matters, but this is still not widespread, and though the 'imagery gap' has to some extent been filled by recent publications[17], the criticism still remains largely valid. It would seem that even in situations where there is wide use of such materials, the ideas expressed in them are rarely fully integrated into the worship pattern as a whole. Part of the problem is really the question of symbols, and this will be considered below.

A third aspect of relevance may be described as 'sensitivity to the world'. This is in many ways closely linked to the problem of the lack of contemporary imagery in worship, for the lack represents an absence of positive evaluation of the κοσμος in which worship occurs[18]. 'Sensitivity to the world' demands not only that the world is taken seriously, which it often is in worship, but also that it is treated with respect.

> 'It is now the Church's business to treat the secular world as an adult pupil and not to try to keep it in statu pupillari . . . . The Church is still behaving a little like a retired schoolmaster; uneasy in any situation in which it is not his main business to lay down the law; impatient of contradiction and debate; inept at conversation on equal terms.'[19]

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16 van den Heuvel, A., op.cit., pp.83-4.

17 e.g., Hymns and Songs, Methodist Publishing House, 1969; Dickson Pope, J., Contemporary Themes in Worship, Galliard, 1970; Barrett-Ayres, R., and Routley, E., New Songs for the Church, Galliard, 1969; Micklem, C., Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship, S.C.M., 1967; Cairns, D., Pitt-Watson, I., Whyte, J.A., and Honeyman, T.B., Worship Now, St. Andrew Press, 1970, W.C.C., Cantate Domino, Barenreiter, 1974; A Worship Book for the Fifth Assembly of the W.C.C., Risk, XI (2-3), 1975.

18 cf. the discussion of attitudes to the world in ch.5.

19 Routley, E., Words, Music and Church, Herbert Jenkins, London, 1969, p.201.

It may be that in a society undergoing secularization, this sensitivity to the world needs careful fostering, and it may be suggested that this is one of the tasks of worship, for it has been argued that because a society is secular, it does not always follow that it thereby develops a deeper and more acute awareness of the world. The loss of God and this awareness of the world are not necessarily co-relative[20]. Here again, the theme of the presence of the holy in essentially mundane situations[21] is of significance. One particular aspect of this may be seen in the context of situations of need, where the relationship with worship has been seen as crucial,

> 'The test of worship is how far it makes us more sensitive to the 'beyond in our midst', to the Christ in the hungry, the homeless and the prisoner. Only if we are more likely to recognise him there after attending an act of worship is worship Christian rather than an act of religiosity in Christian dress.'[22]

Others see the role of the sacraments as being of particular importance here, as a means of the worshipper being 'plunged into the turmoil and suffering of life'[23]. Here too, the question of true nature of worship is raised, for 'sensitivity to the world' is not a justification for liturgy to become merely an expression of the Church's 'social work' activities.

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20 Bloom, A., op.cit., p.121.
21 cf. Every day God.
22 Robinson, J.A.T., Honest to God, S.C.M., 1963, p.90. Similar comments are made by Hoon (op.cit., p.31).
23 Ramsey, A.M., and Suenens, L-J, The Future of the Christian Church, S.C.M., 1971, p.33.

Participation

A second feature of worship in a secularized society is participation. At first sight, there would appear to be a major difference in the degree and forms of participation in Anglican and other Churches using set liturgical forms, from those where liturgy is 'free'. It may be argued however, that familiar and set forms allow for a greater degree of general participation, because prayers are known by, and accessible to, all, and the pattern of responses allows a clear part for the congregation in the liturgical action. But from the 'free' Church side, it may be said that the lack of formally imposed liturgical structure allows for a much greater participation in a variety of forms. However, it would appear that in many cases, 'free' Church worship has often become hidebound, and the real participatory role of the congregation has often been diminished[24].

One of the features of secularization which has been discussed above[25] is man's 'coming of age'. In this situation of 'maturity', with the increasing stress on self-determination, the old authoritarian structure of worship being conducted by one person, sometimes less-well-read or articulate than a number of his congregation[26], is not likely to be acceptable, for worship should not be,

'a happy ignorance but a reasonable service.'[27]

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24 cf. Slack, K., The British Churches Today, S.C.M., 1970, p.59.
25 esp. ch.4.
26 This is not only true of these free Churches which make considerable use of the laity as leaders of worship, but it is sometimes also true of the clergy.
27 Hazleton, R., The God we Worship, Macmillan, New York, 1946, p.6 cited in Hoon, op.cit., p.86.

Much liturgical activity, even in the 'Free Church traditions, which reject a formal doctrine of the priesthood, seems to reflect the idea of the minister being set over against the people, and leading them in worship from a position of superiority, rather than sharing with the congregation in the act of worship, albeit in a special role. Whilst such a position may have been appropriate in earlier societies, it may be questioned whether such attitudes can remain valid today[28]. It has been stressed that though modern man is accustomed to think and act for himself, he is not usually able to do this in worship, and thus feels himself to be manipulated[29]. He takes part in pre-arranged forms which he has done nothing to create and to which he cannot contribute anything,

> 'what confronts him is an institution; he is subjected to a claim which he views sceptically because he is accustomed to recognise as authoritative only what is capable of convincing him . .'[30]

This situation in worship has been condemned as undesirable[31].

As a general principle, it is true that,

> 'in order to give authority to any conclusion or event, the recipient must have had some part in its establishment'[32]

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28 As has already been argued, specialization is one of the features of a bureaucratized society. To argue for participation is not to challenge the specialist role of the clergy, but to suggest that where an activity is done in the name of all, there is an argument for a wider involvement.

29 W.C.C. Faith and Order Consultation, Studia Liturgica, VII (4), 1970, pp.33-4.

30 ibid., p.33.

31 ibid., p.34.

32 van den Heuvel, A., op.cit., p.82.

This being so, the effectiveness of worship becomes dependent on the level of participation of the worshippers. (Participation, in turn may be said to be dependent on the sense of community within the group concerned[33]. This question of community will be considered below.) This dependence on participation has traditionally been used as an argument in favour of a set liturgy, in that familiarity allows full participation, and a freedom to concentrate on inner meanings, rather than outward forms. Whilst there is truth in this argument, the extent to which, in the contemporary situation, this can be called 'participation' is limited. 'Activity' has been used to as a term to describe worship[34], and this would seem to imply that a congregation has a more significant role than that of audience.

One of the main practical problems of the widespread concern for greater participation in worship is the danger of worship becoming a 'performance' with a variety of congregational contributions. This would, in fact, leave the congregation more in the role of 'audience' than they were in the traditional situation[35]. Thus, the question of exactly what may legitimately be described by the term 'liturgy' is raised once more. Although there can be no definitive answer to this question, it is probable that if an activity is a genuine expression of belief, means of offering praise, or of exploring religious understanding, then 'liturgy' is likely to be an appropriate term[36].

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33 cf. Every Day God, pp.291-2.

34 van Buren, P., 'The tendency of our age and the reconception of worship', Studia Liturgica, VII (2-3), 1970, p.9.

35 Such a problem does not arise with all forms of experiment. cf. some of the examples cited by Killinger, which are more on the level of the encounter group. (Killinger, J., Leave it to the Spirit, S.C.M., 1971, e.g., pp.16-32, 70-87).

36 The criterion of relevance is especially important here. A number of situations in which participation was real, and the activities could be called liturgical simply because they were relevant, arising as they did out of the condition and experience of the people, have been described in Mason, D., Ainger, G., and Denny, N., News from

Spontaneity

Closely related to the characteristic of participation is that of spontaneity. The term is here taken as implying not just a freedom from rigid forms which allows for worship and its activities to arise out of current experiences and emotions. It goes further, and implies a feeling of spontaneity about the whole movement or process of change and development which may be going on in worship, so that there is a flexibility and spontaneity about the framework within which the changes in worship are occurring. In this situation, there is need for perpetual and creative doubt[37].

Spontaneity has been classed as one of the 'new rubrics' for worship in a secular age[38]. The idea of a rubric of spontaneity need not be a contradiction in terms, for it is not a command, 'be spontaneous', but rather it is,

> 'the injunction to follow the spirit and allow a living interaction to come into operation.'[39]

Spontaneity understood in these terms would include an important experiential aspect, which would emphasise especially that worship should be based on first hand experience, and not on second-hand authority. In this context, Hollenweger has stated his conviction that,

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36 (cont.)
Notting Hill, Epworth, 1967, and Jones, R., Worship for Today, Epworth, 1968

37 Adler, E., 'Worship in a secular age', Student World, XVI (1), 1963, p.91 (quoting van den Heuvel).

38 Panikkar, R., Worship and Secular Man, p.72.

39 ibid., p.74.

> 'by many experiments in several countries . . . historical churches too can discover the charismatic dimension of worship, including some of the aspects of Pentecostal churches, but not confining them to these. .'[40]

In the situation of the traditional Churches, however, the rubric of spontaneity is not likely to be taken so literally as in Pentecostalism, and thus it will, in some ways, pose more of a problem. How is spontaneity to be compatible with a basically ordered and structured mode of worship?

In the traditional Churches, spontaneity is likely to be understood in a more restricted sense than it is, for example, in the Pentecostal Churches. One interpretation of this type of spontaneity is that,

> 'fresh links are constantly being forged between worship in its more or less fixed forms and human experience.'[41]

It is the absense of such fresh links or 'surprises' which has been blamed for the lack of authenticity in much conventional worship[42], for, it is claimed, life is not as well ordered and predictable as much that goes on in worship. Such links may take many forms, and this clearly relates to the question of relevance discussed above, for the concerns of industrial, political and social life may well be those experiences which it is felt appropriate to bring in to the worship situation. Also, however, a variety of types of emotional or

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40 Hollenweger, W.J., 'The social and ecumenical significance of Pentecostal worship', Studia Liturgica, VIII (4), 1972, p.215. Fuller reference to Pentecostalism in its various forms will be made in the appendix, but it may be noted here that spontaneity and participation are obviously no problem in that type of worship because of the sense of freedom and equality of those concerned.

41 W.C.C. Faith and Order Consultation, Studia Liturgica, VII (4), 1970, p.34.

42 cf. Bellah, R.N. Beyond Belief, Harper & Row, 1970, p.215.

spiritual experience may influence what occurs in worship. It may be a function of worship to help to integrate these experiences from many areas of life.

An important aspect of spontaneity must be the use of living and meaningful symbols at points in the worship where they are felt to be appropriate. Whilst the whole question of symbols in contemporary worship must be considered separately[43], it may be said here that there would seem to be a certain essential spontaneity about symbols. They must convey spontaneously the message they embody. Furthermore, the idea of a 'rubric of spontaneity' would seem to mean that no symbols are to be imposed, they must be consistent with the world-view of the worshipping group or be rejected[44].

'Spontaneity' inevitably implies a certain 'newness'. Things are done which arise out of experience and emotions, and not because they belong to some pre-conceived pattern. There is, therefore, the evident danger that newness for its own sake might be seen as becoming all-important. But spontaneity and continuity are not contradictory. The important factor is that there should be a sense of development or evolution, so that the spontaneity arises not only out of experience but also out of tradition. This being so, the tension between spontaneity and continuity is diminished. Both spontaneity and continuity have been listed by Panikkar among the 'new rubrics' of worship[45]. Furthermore, the polarity between structure and spontaneity

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43 see below.
44 Panikkar, R., op.cit., p73.
45 Panikkar, R., Studia Liturgica, VII, (2-3), 1970, p.59.

is also an important factor which is has been seen as vital to preserve in order that worship should remain viable[46]. It is only against the background of such a polarity that liturgical experiment is likely to be positive, and thus to avoid the danger, mentioned above, of newness for its own sake[47].

The Symbols and Language of Worship

> 'There is a crisis of symbols, not symbols in the sense of signs, but in the sense of natural and encompassing expressions of reality . . . Are there genuine symbols? . . . . . Can we expect to find universally valid symbols? . . . . Do such symbols accord with the particular historical origin of the Christian faith?'[48]

In order for any of the characteristics of worship which have been discussed above to be viable, it is necessary that one outstanding problem be resolved. This is the problem of symbols, and the difficulties are summarised in the statement quoted above. The search for appropriate symbols and language for worship is, essentially, the problem of the 'culture' of worship[49]. It is a central problem, for liturgy is inevitably cultural, as it cannot be celebrated apart from the culture patterns of its own or an earlier period. It must, to a large extent, reflect the society from which it originally sprang.

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46 Wainwright, G., 'The risks and possibilities of liturgical reform', Studia Liturgica, VIII (2), 1971, pp.77-8. Wainwright regards this as one of the eight essential polarities of Christian worship.

47 The difference between change and real experiment is pointed out by Jasper, who makes the comparison with the freedom and flexibility of modes of expression which are found in modern theatre, and urges that this freedom should also exist in the Church. (Jasper, R., Some Aspects of the Liturgy in Contemporary Society, 1970, pp.4-6).

48 W.C.C., Faith and Order consultation, Studia Liturgica, VII (4), 1970, p.38.

49 cf. the 'ghetto/dessert' dichotomy described by Davis, (Studia Liturgica, VII (2-3), 1970, pp.10-27).

The question 'what are the universal symbols of today?' is necessarily a recurring one, for, whilst many express dissatisfaction with the traditional symbols, there is an equal reluctance to state the nature of contemporary symbols. It would seem that, in a rapidly changing culture, the quest for symbols must be a continuing one, as it is doubtful whether there can, any longer, be a sense of their permanence. This very openness towards new meanings and symbols may be seen as yet another characteristic of worship in a secular age[50].

The importance of the search for new symbols depends on the view held of the true nature and function of symbols. They may be seen at the level of language and communication, or they may be regarded as having profound meaning in themselves, and thus belonging to the sphere of finite reality, and, as symbols, expressing man's relationship to the infinite[51]. In this sense, it is difficult to confine the meaning and function of the symbol too closely, for,

> 'the relationship between the symbol and the symbolized reality is a sui generis one. The symbol is neither a substitute for the 'thing' nor the 'thing in itself', but the thing as it appears, as it expresses itself, as it manifests itself . .'[52]

Symbols may also be seen as being powerful in themselves to motivate behaviour and attitudes. Thus, according to this view, religion itself is the sum-total of a system of symbols[53]. It is with symbols in the first two of the above senses that the main

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50 Hudson, F.M., 'Worship in a secular age', Foundations, VII, 1964, p.330.
51 Davies, J.G., Every Day God, pp.335-9.
52 Panikkar, R., Worship and Secular Man, p.20.
53 Geertz, C., 'Religion as a cultural system', in Cutler, D., (ed), The Religious Situation, 1968, p.643.

concern rests in the present context. But it is because of the third sense that the contemporary quest for new symbols is so difficult, for words and actions are inevitably used in a different way in worship than elsewhere, and worship thus tends to employ myths and symbols in a fairly rigid fashion.

White, defining a religious symbol as,

> 'a means of expressing the ultimate by means of the proximate.'[54]

questions whether the extensive use of symbols in worship is justified, arguing that if theology is able to break with myth, and enter into a process of demythologising, worship would be able to do the same[55]. However, assuming that symbols are still to be used, the problem remains for whilst new symbols are often suggested, it is difficult to estimate the validity of these until they have already acquired some special status.

It would seem essential that any new symbols in a secularized society should be elementary, in order that they may be readily comprehended by all[56]. Furthermore, it is necessary that they are already shared by the community in some context before they are valid as religious symbols.

> 'A symbol does not create the act of sharing; it rather flows from the sharing.'[57]

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54 White, J.F., op.cit., p.37.
55 ibid., pp.38-9.
56 Kent, J.H.S., op.cit., p.53.
57 Greeley, A., 'Religious symbols, liturgy and communion', Concilium, II (7), 1971, p.67.

Thus, it may be suggested that Christian worship itself is a kind of symbol of communal love existing within and among the group[58]. (This raises the question of the whole social context of worship, which will be considered below). The symbols employed need not only to be elementary, but also in a sense, elemental, in that they have to be rooted in the world of nature and of human relationships[59], in that they may reflect and express the most fundamental realities. Whilst many of the Biblical symbols are still potent for many people, they retain their value because of their ordinary and elemental nature, and not because they are essentially religious.

The relative or continuing value of particular symbols or images will not be discussed here. There is one general image, however, which seems to have special significance in the context of secularization, and so will be considered briefly. This is the idea of the 'pilgrim-nature' of worship. This characteristic arises out of the emphasis on change, and may be seen as a reflection of the concept of secularization as an ongoing process.

It has been claimed that in the secular society, everything is under constant review, for, lacking external sources of authority, man becomes the arbiter[60]. Thus, the chief metaphor in the context of contemporary worship is that of the <u>way</u> rather than of the home, for movement is constant. Thus, liturgical language of the Tabernacle is

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58 Davies, J.G., op.cit.
59 van den Heuvel, op.cit., p.83.
60 ibid.

more relevant than that of the Temple. van den Heuvel has claimed that many would have found traditional worship more meaningful if the pilgrim image had been more strongly expressed, and there had been concentration on,

'the moving character of God and his people'[61]

In this context, the mobile society may be contrasted with the static Church[62]. In this way, such concepts as 'exploration into God', or the idea of a constant quest, acquire a special importance, for they represent the theological continuation of the same characteristic.

Whilst the search for new symbols represents an on-going problem, the question of the language of worship is probably one of which there is a more general consciousness, and which is apparently capable of easier solution. The problem here arises out of the obsolescence of much of the language of worship. There would appear to be two straightforward alternatives; either to retain archaic language, however dated, or to use contemporary language. But if the first alternative is followed it is likely to be incomprehensible to many people, and if the second, the results may be absurdly comical[63], particularly in view of the natural conservatism of many with regard to the language of worship.

Whatever the activities of worship, the use of language remains inevitable. The real problem of language is not that of the personal

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61 ibid.
62 cf. Fisher, P., 'Present day liturgical renewal; some guidelines', Studia Liturgica, VIII (1), 1971, pp.42-51.
63 cf. White, J.F., op.cit., pp.40-41.

pronouns or verbal forms[64], but of the more general vocabulary and images employed. Language in this sense may be seen as one of the greatest hindrances to worship's integration with ordinary life, for

> 'one of the greatest difficulties is the agricultural background of practically all traditional forms of worship, whilst in our time life, and especially human life, is dominated by what could be called the technicultural environment.'[65]

A further difference between everyday thought and language and that of worship is that whilst the former is usually forced to be direct and concrete, the latter tends to be abstract.

> 'Church language . . . begins with abstractions and hopes that people will discover their relevance to living. The language of the world is always being kept alive by life, whose servant it is, whereas the language of the Church easily ossifies.'[66]

Both of these statements would seem to imply the need for the language of worship to be natural. It follows that worship in a secularized society must seek to use language belonging to the contemporary world whilst being aware of the danger of artificiality if that language does not integrate well with the symbols of worship. Here it may be questioned whether there is a limit to many people's acceptance of 'ordinary' language in worship, because of the threat it may appear to

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64 e.g., 'thee, thou, thy, ye' are the characteristic 16th century pronouns often found in worship. 'Hast, vouchsafeth' etc., represent the verbal forms. Since this is the language of the 1662 prayer book and of the King James version of the Bible, there is the further danger of inconsistency if archaic language is employed at certain parts of the service, and contemporary at others. Because of the widespread use of the archaic language in prayers and hymns, such inconsistency is, however, almost inevitable.

65 Panikkar, R., op.cit., pp.59-60.

66 Rowe, T., 'Worship', in Waterhouse, J.M. (ed), Beware the Church, Epworth, 1968, p.41.

pose to the 'otherness' of God. (It is this sense of 'otherness' and of the sense of mystery associated with worship which is often used to rationalise the exclusive use in liturgy of an archaic or dead language. It is also rationalised in terms of the reverence due to God, who, it is felt, ought not to be addressed in the language used for fellow men[67].)

Discussion of the symbols and language of worship raises two more fundamental questions. The first is whether 'new' symbols and images are really and radically new, or whether they are in some sense merely a translation of the old and established ones. If the latter is the case, then it is unlikely that questions of, for example, the motivation and context of worship will have been fully examined in the light of contemporary approaches to worship. Thus, the criticism has been made of some recent liturgical publications that,

> 'they share with the traditional elements the important limitation of assuming a detailed consensus of belief, experience and imagery to which the worshipper must either subscribe, or subscribe with continual mental reservations, or simply reject.'[68]

The second question concerns the extent to which worship should go in removing its 'strange' language and symbols, so that they are fully comprehensible to all. Whilst it is generally accepted that in many cases the language of worship is out of touch with the reality of contemporary society, it remains true that almost every human activity or organisation develops a body of 'technical' language.

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67 Howell, C., 'Vernacular', in Davies, J.G., (ed), A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship, S.C.M., 1972, p.363.

68 Corlett, T., in a discussion in Living Worship, II (1), 1972, p.6.

Whilst this is particularly true of sporting activities, it is not restricted to them. Music, politics, drama, hi-fi and motor enthusiasts all have their own 'language'. Even different social groups tend to develop their own distinctive expressions and images, and it is the shared knowledge of this 'code' which may help to bind the group together. This being so, it would seem that worship, as a human activity, should also retain this right. Thus, the argument is not that worship should have no special language or imagery, but rather that those symbols and images which it employs should be relevant and meaningful.

The Social Context of Worship

The social context of worship, or the question of the nature of the worshipping community, can be seen at two levels, and there is, in a sense, an inevitable and permanent tension between these two. The first sense is that of the 'communio sanctorum', for,

> 'the Christian gospel creates community. It has always done so. It does not create 'Christianity' as a philosophy or system, but leads to the formation of the Church, i.e., a community of persons. The Gospel calls men and women from diverse families, tribes . . . etc., into a new community. Over the centuries Christians have deepened and elaborated this fact in various doctrinal affirmations (ecclesiologies), and millions of Christians have thanked . . . God for the support and joy they found in the community. . . in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.'[69]

On this understanding, the worshipping community gathers around the preaching of the Word[70], a fact which is central in making Christianity a communal rather than an individualistic religion. But the Church is

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69 Paton, D.M., (ed), Breaking Barriers, (The official report of the fifth assembly of the W.C.C.) S.P.C.K., 1976, p.74.

70 Bonhoeffer, D., Sanctorum Communio, Collins, 1963, pp.155-7.

thus seen as not just a community, and the more emotive terms such as 'fellowship' are often employed. But this concept of the communio sanctorum is not limited to the local congregation, it is, rather, a collective term for all worshipping Christians. It may be claimed that true and full worship is always an act of the whole body of Christ, and that though this sense is often lost in contemporary worship, the Mass retains the basis of the idea[71].

> 'He who has not felt in his bones his own solidarity with the rest of mankind has not yet known the heart of worship.'[72]

The second level of understanding the worshipping community is in the sociological, rather than the theological sense. Mention has already been made of the sociological changes in community structures as a whole, and their effect on the worshipping community[73]. With the increases in urbanisation, 'village-type' communities become rarer, and thus, in the complex social patterns of the contemporary city, the question of the social context of worship acquires a special significance. These changes are basic to the problem of language and communication in worship, for, in a 'village-type' community where all the members know each other, problems of language are less likely to be significant[74]. In a more mobile society, however, there is no

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71 Verghese, P., The Joy of Freedom; Eastern Worship and Modern Man, Lutterworth, 1967, p.19.

72 ibid.

73 cf. ch.7.

74 e.g., if it is an agricultural community, it is easy for the language of liturgy to be oriented towards the living world of all the members of the congregation. Furthermore, where all the individual members know each other well, symbolic communication is less necessary.

natural community from which a Church may expect to draw its congregation. Traditionally, the parish provided and defined the natural social and geographical area from which the worshipping community would come[75]. But, as was suggested in Chapter 7, the residential parish may no longer be the appropriate 'catchment area', and other possible groupings, such as the educational or industrial, also have their problems. Furthermore, where there is no natural sense of community, there may be a danger of some artificiality in a group and in its worship, unless it is recognised that 'community' (particularly in the sense of 'fellowship'), is not an end in itself[76]. There are other dangers in the concept of community. It is easy to think in terms only of its positive values, but there is a danger that in the search for community, one community gets set over against another and introversion and intolerance set in[77]. (It is here that the sociological distinction between 'communal' and 'associational' types of Church membership is helpful[78]. In both cases the same preconditions for effective and meaningful worship are likely to apply, but the expectations of individual members are likely to differ. In a secularized society, it is probable that the latter type of membership will increasingly become dominant[79].)

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75 Even the parish system in earlier decades was limited as a basis for community worship. Whilst in many cases the parish system may work for the established Church in England and Scotland, and also for the Catholic Church, the problems of an identifiable community remain in, for example, the case of the Methodist Church in England.

76 cf. Davies, J.G., Every Day God, p. 335.

77 W.C.C., Work Book (fifth assembly of the W.C.C.), Geneva, 1975, p. 34.

78 This is adapted from Tonnies' theory of Gemeineschaft and Gessellschaft. The terms 'communal' and 'associational' are those employed by Sissons in his analysis of Church membership in Falkirk. (Sissons, P.L., The Social Significance of Church Membership in the Burgh of Falkirk, Church of Scotland, 1973, esp. pp. 277-80.)

79 In spite of the lessening of community expectations of membership and the increase in geographical mobility which is likely to sever the ties with particular congregations, it is probable that there will still be a significant proportion of what Sissons calls 'secondary communal members' (op.cit., p.277) who, although not born and brought up in a particular Church have, by various criteria, become communal members from associational members.

In the contemporary situation of large urban developments and little natural sense of community, Davies has argued that there is little likelihood of there being continuing value in the large liturgical assembly, for, in the urban situation, large communities no longer exist. Thus, worship in a great assembly cannot be the expression or activity of a pre-existent community[80]. Thus the small group becomes increasingly important for worship in highly urbanised societies, but, as Bonhoeffer warns, for such groups,

> 'to increase at the expense of the local church community is a retrograde step, a proof of a lack of spiritual productiveness in the local church, and a flight from the seriousness of the historical situation. Both kinds of congregation should grow hand in hand. The impulse to community should not sap the life-blood of the public church, but contribute to it.'[81]

Despite suggestions for groupings or settings other than the residential communtiy as the basis for worship, the residential community is generally favoured because it is the one community that all members of the family have in common. This is evidently true, but the wide age ranges that are represented, especially in situations that still include the three- or even four-generational family, may well raise a number of impediments to effective worship, particularly in view of the levels of development of religious attitudes in these various age groups[82]. It is these factors that lead to the question

> 'Why should worship be the one unnatural activity of the family when so much else is determined and shared by the peer group?'[83]

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80 Davies, J.G., op.cit., pp.294-9.

81 Bonhoeffer, D., op.cit., p.160. Davies, too, sees an important, but different relationship between the larger and smaller groups, in that the latter would come together periodically into a larger whole, but he sees their diversity as an important means of accommodating to a pluriform society.

82 cf. Argyle, M., Religious Behaviour, R.K.P., 1958, pp.58-70; Goldman, R., Religious Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence, R.K.P., 1965.

83 White, J.F., 'Characteristics of effective Christian worship', Studia Liturgica, VIII (4), 1972, p.197.

This again, involves the traditional idea of the 'separateness' of worship. If it is the only activity in which all members of a family are expected to participate together, then White's argument can be upheld, although, conversely it may be said that if this is so, then it is all the more important that there should be one activity which is shared by all. However, if it is one among a number of such activities, then the traditional emphasis of the Church on the place of the family, although by no means misplaced, may have to undergo some modification as other concepts of the structures of the worshipping community change.

Conclusions

Worship in a secularized society is inevitably challenged. The breakdown of traditional views of the realms of the sacred and the secular, or desacralization, means that one of the former roles of worship, as a means of relating these two realms, is lost. More significantly, the loss of dominance by the Church as a social institution means that it can no longer assume that large numbers of people will wish to join in its main activity, worship. Furthermore, the 'crisis of credibility' which has affected many means that even for those who can still identify socially with the Church, there may be major difficulties of belief, not only in terms of traditional concepts of God, but more especially in the symbols and language employed in worship.

It was argued above that in this situation there are three possible alternatives for worship. It may continue in its traditional forms, on the basis that people must alter their attitudes in order to conform to the expectations and demands of worship, rather than

worship having to be altered to meet their needs. Secondly, it may be suggested that, in a secularized society, worship is essentially an anachronistic activity, and that there is therefore little or no place for it. The third option is to recognise a continuing place for worship in such a society, but also the need for a radical re-examination of the traditional attitudes towards, and aspects of worship. It would appear that in the light of basic human tendencies towards ritual and celebration, worship in some form is likely to be a continuing activity, and that therefore the third alternative outlined above would seem to be the most appropriate description of the place of worship in a secularized society.

In this case, it has been suggested that a number of aspects of worship are likely to some under especial scrutiny, or to demand revision. This will, in some cases, involve something more radical than the mere 'translation' implicit in some forms of 'experimental worship'. In the light of the general elements of the secularization syndrome, the areas which would seem to be particularly sensitive include the relevance of worship, - for in a situation where duty cannot serve as a motivation for worship, worship must of itself appear as a relevant and worthwhile activity to its participants. Secondly, it has been argued that the worshippers must be participants, intellectually as well as emotionally; this characteristic has close links with another, spontaneity. Spontaneity may allow the kind of flexibility that will permit relevance. Both participation and spontaneity suggest a breaking down of some of the traditional role-barriers of worship. The question of the symbols and language of worship is particularly important, especially as this constitutes the 'culture'

of worship, thus highlighting the problem of the 'ghetto/dessert' dichotomy described by Davis[84]. It is on such areas as these that the forces of secularization would appear to have particular impact.

For all of these, the question of the social context is of especial importance, as, with the changing social structures of large connurbations, the problem of identifying the particular communities which provide the social contexts for worship become more acute. Whilst the simple causative association between urbanisation and secularization was rejected in Chapter 1, it is nevertheless true that the effects of secularization are probably seen most clearly in urban situations, and this would seem to be particularly true for the questions of worship and secularization. The urban situation, however, also provides greater and more varied opportunities for constructive experiment, both in forms and contexts of worship.

This section has necessarily been somewhat hypothetical in attempting to see the effect of some of the general changes inherent in the secularization syndrome on so central a religious activity as worship. Theoretical suggestions have been made as to the chief characteristics of worship in a secularized society[85]. This does not mean to imply that all of these would be necessary for valid worship in such a society. It may well be that a number of very traditional forms or features of worship will continue to be valid, even in a strongly secularized society. To take an extreme example, the Liturgy of the Eastern Orthodox Church would appear to have continuing validity and meaningfulness, even though there would seem to be little in it that may

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84 Davis, C., Studia Liturgica, VII (2-3), 1970, pp.10-27.
85 A few specific examples will be discussed in the local studies in chapter 14.

be described as relevant to contemporary technological man. In this case, however, two other factors are of particular significance. The first is the social context, for most Eastern Orthodox congregations in Britain also represent some form of ethnic or expatriate community. Secondly, in this liturgy the symbolism is extremely powerful, and thus transcends the limitations which apply to less potent symbolism in other traditions[86].

Worship in a secularized society is not a static matter, any more than secularization itself. It represents rather a continual searching and quest for relevant forms, symbols and structures. This quest may lead to the discovery of the radically new, as well as to the re-discovery of very old and traditional forms and images. With this idea of the constant quest, the stress on the 'pilgrim-nature'[87] of worship in a secularized society would appear to be particularly apt.

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86 'Modern man . . . is tired of the preached word. He has a desperate need for levels in his mind deeper than the conscious to respond to the transcendent through beauty of form.' (Verghese, P., op.cit., p.3). This statement would seem aptly to describe the way in which the Orthodox liturgy can transcend these limitations.

87 cf. van den Heuvel, A., op.cit.

S E C T I O N III

SECULARIZATION AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

CHAPTER 9

INTRODUCTION

A second area in which the implications of secularization may be considered in depth is Religious Education. In discussing worship and secularization, many of the considerations were speculative, with a forward-looking perspective on the possible nature and form of worship in a society attempting to be true to both its secularized character and its Christian commitment. In discussing Religious Education, however, the perspective is basically historical, in considering both the development of the official position of religion within the educational system and the growth of various aims in the teaching of religion.

Religious Education would appear to provide a useful focus for a study of secularization in several ways. Firstly, it is an indicator of popular attitudes towards religion. As was argued in Section 1, it is difficult to measure such attitudes with any accuracy, for statistical surveys tend to rely heavily on attendance at Church services, or other forms of religious practice, which represent only one part of an individual's total approach to religion. Whilst statements on Religious Education may represent a somewhat vicarious attitude to religion[1], they are, nevertheless, helpful, in that they shed some light on the status of religion in society as a whole. This aspect will be considered in Chapter 10, where the place of religion in the educational system as a whole will be discussed.

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1 This would seem to be supported by the fact that in the 1963 survey commissioned by A.B.C. Television, more parents expressed themselves in favour of R.E. in schools than were prepared to express belief in God. (A.B.C. Television, Television and Religion, University of London Press , 1964, p.45 and p.87.)

Secondly, the development and changes in the place of religion in the schools would appear to have some value for the study of secularization. It may be questioned whether such changes reflect the process of secularization in society as a whole, or should, perhaps be seen as some form of reaction against that process. It would seem that the developments which have occurred in this area, and particularly the changes in the aims and content of the teaching of religion in schools, albeit as part of curriculum development as a whole, may help to illustrate some of the theoretical features of secularization described earlier.

Thirdly, whilst one does not readily accept the description of the school as a microcosm of society, it remains true that schools do provide a reflection of society on a limited scale. Moreover, by the development of their own culture and traditions, they can sometimes remain immune from the full force of change in society at large. Therefore, to examine the status of religion in the schools is to consider one aspect of secularization in a more 'controlled' environment.

Two comments must be made on method. The first concerns the omission of the question of school worship. It might appear that, in view of the inclusion of worship as a major area of the study of secularization in the preceding section, school worship should feature largely in the present context. However, apart from occasional brief references, it has not been given prominence. The reasons for this are that in many cases, the issue of school worship, and its inherent problems, has not been confronted so thoroughly by those involved at local or national levels as have the questions of the aims and content of the teaching

of Religious Education[2]. It is therefore, less possible to trace clear developments in this area. There is also, in many cases, a very real confusion of aims between 'assembly' and school worship. This confusion may in part, be due to the legal requirement of daily worship under the 1944 Education Act[3]. Because of this confusion, it is difficult to apply the same approaches and criteria to school worship as were used in section 2, for the basic situations of school and Church worship are very different. School worship also raises questions of a rather different order from those raised by Religious Education as a whole. For these reasons, it has not been considered appropriate to give prominence to school worship in the present discussion.

This section deals with Religious Education in England and Wales only. This too is deliberate. Religious Education in Scotland has a very different and much more restricted history, and is at present at a different stage of development from R.E. in England and Wales. Because of its limitations, it cannot be treated on the same broad canvas as Religious Education in England and Wales, and will therefore be discussed in Section 4, which will consider the whole question of secularization in Scotland.

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2 There is often a practical reason for this. Whereas, in most schools, the curriculum planning in Religious Education is organised by a specialist Head of Department, sometimes with a team of specialists or sub-specialists implementing that teaching, the planning of school assemblies and worship often remains the prerogative of the Head teacher. Thus, assembly is used for the expression and communication of the values of the school and remains more 'traditional' in many cases than the classroom teaching of religion.

3 See Appendix 2 for the provisions of this Act.

CHAPTER 10

THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF RELIGION WITHIN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

Introduction

> 'In England from the first, education was the creature of religion, the school was an adjunct of the Church, and the schoolmaster was an ecclesiastical officer.'[1]

Whilst such a statement as this is inevitably somewhat general, it serves to characterise the traditional relationship between education and religion. From the sixth century to the seventeenth, all educational establishments were under exclusively ecclesiastical control[2]. During this period, the Church was the provider not only of the majority of existing welfare services, but also of education, and the provision of both was closely related. Later on, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in cases where formal educational provision was limited, Sunday Schools often undertook the teaching of basic literacy, although the aims of such teaching were often more evangelistic than educational[3]. Today, the number of schools maintained wholly or partly by religious bodies is small[4], and the whole question of the place of religion in

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1 Leach, A.F., Educational Charters and Documents, 598-1909, C.U.P., 1911, p.xii.

2 ibid.

3 cf. Gilbert, A.D., Religion and Society in Industrial England, p.201.

4 The decline in the relative importance of the voluntary schools during the 20th century alone is of considerable significance. The trends are illustrated by the following figures

Type of School	1900	1938	1962	1967
Council	47.0	69.6	77.6	76.9
Church of England	40.2	22.1	11.9	11.8
Roman Catholic	5.4	7.4	8.4	9.3
Other	7.6	0.9	2.1	2.0

(Table reproduced from Murphy, J., Church, State and Schools in Britain, 1800-1970, R.K.P., 1971, p.125. The figures show the percentages of children on the rolls of the various types of school. Independent, direct grant, nursery and special schools are omitted.)

schools, especially in state schools, is a source of continuing controversy and debate. Education in all its stages is regarded as the responsibility, and by some as the rightful monopoly, of the state.

At first sight, this decline of the role of religion within the educational system might be taken as a prima facie case of secularization in Shiner's third and fourth senses (disengagement of society from religion and the transposition of religious beliefs and institutions). It may also be seen as secularization in the literal sense of something, in this case, education, passing from ecclesiastical into lay control. The relationship of Church and state through the schools has not, however, been so straightforward, and the development of the relationship leading to the present position has not been smooth. The circumstances leading up to the establishment of the 'Dual system' and the provision for the teaching of religion in schools have been closely bound up with major issues of educational politics. These factors must be considered more fully before an analysis of developments in the light of the various secularization theories is attempted.

The 'religious problem' of the nineteenth century

Although Church schools had come under the general authority of the state inspectorate by the mid-19th century[5], the main developments

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5 The attitudes of the inspectors to such schools can be seen from the instructions given to them in 1840,

> 'In the case of schools connected with the national Church the inspectors will inquire, with special care, how far the doctrines and principles of the Church are instilled into the minds of the children. The inspectors will ascertain whether Church accommodation of sufficient extent, and in a proper situation, is provided for them, and proper means taken to ensure their suitable behaviour during the service; whether inquiry is made afterwards by their teachers how far they have profited by the public ordinances of religion which they have been attending.

in the question of religion in education came at the end of that century and the early part of the present century. By the late 1800's the 'religious problem' had become a major source of controversy in political and educational debate. This problem was complex in nature and had arisen for a number of historical reasons. Basically, it centred around the difficulty of providing state education for all without offending the religious feelings of the various denominational groups already involved in education. The issues in the problem at the end of the nineteenth century have been summarised in the following terms,

i 'The state might have agreed to support everywhere separate schools for each of the different denominations . . . But quite apart from the desirability of making the education of children a cohesive rather than a divisive force, there were many single-school areas . . . . .particularly ... rural areas . . .How could the religious instruction, of different denominations be provided in one school?'

ii 'The obvious solution would be the division of secular from religious instruction, allowing the latter . . to be given separately to children of the various denominations . . . but most committed Anglicans and many non-conformists . . insisted that to separate secular and religious teaching was to act upon, and to convey to the child, a wholly wrong idea of the prupose of both; a religious atmosphere should infuse all that was done in the school.'

iii 'Given that religious instruction must be an integral part of the school day, perhaps some form of it acceptable to all denominations could be found? . . . . the leaders of some denominations denied this, claiming that undenominational religious teaching would outrage conscientious beliefs, and lead to apathy, cynicism and irreligion . . . . . there could be no agreement even as to the version of the Bible to be employed.'

iv 'There could be a combination of undenominational religious instruction for 'united' classes (so as to prevent segregation either of pupils or of religious and secular education), with denominational religious instruction given to the separate

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5 (cont.)
The inspectors will also report on the daily practice of the school with reference to divine worship . . . whether daily instruction is given in the Bible; whether the catechism and liturgy are explained . . . they will inquire likewise whether the children are taught private prayers to repeat at home . . .' (Instructions to Inspectors of Schools 1840-1, from Minutes of the Committee of Council, 1840-1, cited in Maclure, J.S., Educational Documents: England and Wales, 1816-1963, Chapman and Hall, 1965, p.51.)

> groups at other times. This, of course, would meet some of the objections made against other proposals, but failed to satisfy those who considered undenominational teaching impossible to achieve, and/or harmful.'[6]

Although these problems foreshadowed much of what may be called the 'secularization of Religious Education', one basic issue is clearly present here. That is the question of the integration of the sacred and the secular, or of the teaching of religion and other subjects[7]. The 'religious problem' of the nineteenth century in itself reflects something of the condition of the age. Whilst, as has been argued above[8], it is difficult in any way to attempt to describe certain periods of history as high points of religious activity or fervour, the very fact that, in the nineteenth century, the whole question of the type of denominational teaching that school children were to receive was a topic which dominated educational thinking and administration is, in itself, some indication of the contemporary status of religion. However, the significance of this is limited; it must be remembered that education up to this time had been run almost entirely by voluntary bodies. It was therefore, inevitable that in the attempt by the state to take over such schools and expand the range of educational provision, the Churches would wish to cling on to this important sphere of influence over the young. In this situation, the tensions which thus arose appeared to create an insoluble problem.

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6 Murphy, J., op.cit., pp.13-4.

7 The idea of the 'separateness' of teaching religion is still maintained in some schools. It is accentuated by such practices as opening the R.E. lesson (but no other lesson) with prayer.

8 ch. 2.

As was stated at the time,

> 'United education is an impossibility. The Dissenters and and the Church have each laid down limits they will not pass, and there is no power that can either force, persuade or delude them.'[9]

The Education Act of 1870

The solution to the religious problem of the nineteenth century eventually came in the 1870 Education Act[10]. This brought voluntary schools under the state system by means of grants paid to the voluntary bodies, but no such grant was to be payable for the teaching of religious subjects. The Act also established local school boards, responsible for the provision of elementary education in their own areas[11]. Very few boards took advantage of the section of the Act which allowed them, if they so wished, to exclude all religious teaching from their schools[12]. Where religious instruction was given, it was to be within the terms of what has become known as the 'Cowper-Temple clause, which stated that,

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9 The words of Lord Ashley, later the Earl of Shaftesbury, in a letter to Sir Robert Peel. (Parker, C.S., Sir Robert Peel, John Murray, 1899, Vol. II, pp.561-2).

10 See Appendix 2 for a summary of the provisions of this Act.

11 In the debates preceding the passing of the bill, there were a number of attempts to ensure that all rate-aided schools were to be completely unsectarian. This led to the famous reply by W.E. Forster that,

> 'The English people cling to the Bible, and no measure will be more unpopular than that which declares by Act of Parliament that the Bible shall be excluded from the school' (from verbatim report of debate in Parliament during the progress of the Elementary Education Bill, quoted in Curtis, S.J. History of Education in Great Britain, University Tutorial Press, 1963, p.165.

12 In 1888 it was reported that,

> 'Out of 2,225 School Boards . . . only 7 in England and 50 in Wales . . . have dispensed entirely with religious teaching or observances' (Cross Commission, Final Report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the elementary education acts, England and Wales, 1888, p.113.)

'no religious catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination'[13]

should be taught[14].

By the 1870 Elementary Education Act, the 'Dual System' was established. This meant that voluntary and board schools were to exist side by side within the state system. Under the Act, the voluntary schools were allowed to retain a measure of independence, and more significantly, their own distinctive ethos (usually, though not necessarily, religious), whilst being integrated with the state system in a number of respects. The passing of this Act, and its implementation, were neither simple nor straightforward, and the description here has necessarily been brief.

It would seem that at this stage, religious education made its first appearance in a 'political' role; that is, the provision of the subject was being used in order to achieve the political end of national elementary education. That is not to say, however, that those involved in the passing of the legislation were not deeply concerned for the Church and for the teaching of religion. Equally, it would be misleading to say that the 1870 Act marked the beginning of the secularization of religious teaching. This is mainly because the

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13 Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, (Commons), Vol.CCII, col.275.

14 Some school boards took this very literally, or even went beyond the demands of the clause. Murphy (op.cit., p.68) cites a number of examples of this. For instance, the Sheffield Board instructed its teachers,

'not only to adhere strictly to the terms of the fourteenth section of the Act, which provides that no 'religious formulary which is distinctive of any religious denomination shall be taught in the school', but also to abstain from all denominational teaching'. (Bingham, J.H., The Period of the Sheffield School Board, 1870-1903, Sheffield, 1949, p.159.)

In Leicester, the Liberals proposed that the Bible should be read without note or comment, and when this failed, they suggested that it should be read without reference to God!

the instruction of the time, in spite of the Cowper-Temple clause, was basically catechetical. In many ways, it is difficult to apply the term 'religious education' to the religious teaching in the period following the 1870 Act in any meaningful sense[15]. Secondly, although 1870 is an important date in the history of education, it is doubtful whether there was any significant difference in the form and content of religious teaching before and after this date. Nevertheless, the 1870 Act is important in the context of secularization and Religious Education in one important respect, namely that the religious teaching was no longer exclusively and directly in the hands of the Churches. This was the first step in a long process of the differentiation of the subject away from the Churches[16]. It has already been noted that some school boards made especially determined efforts to avoid any sort of Church influence in their religious teaching[17]. Although religious instruction was already regarded as different from other subjects of the curriculum, this difference being accentuated by the timetable restrictions imposed by the Act (it had to be taught at the

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15 One of the main problems was the narrowness of the conception of the subject. This arose largely from the fears and suspicions so evident in the period leading up to the passing of the Act, but also from the lack of clarity in the aims of religious teaching. These factors,

> 'produced a restricted form of religious teaching which came perilously close to the undenominationalism which Gladstone had feared, and possessed little of the richness of either Anglican or dissenter traditions'. (Curry, N.G., The Aims and Practice of Religious Teaching in the County and State Schools in England and Victoria since 1870, Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1968, p.51).

16 This will be discussed further later in this chapter.

17 cf. the examples cited above of the ways in which school boards went beyond the restrictions of the the Cowper-Temple clause. It was such boards which gave the sort of teaching which came to be known as 'Cowper Templeism', a term of disdain for teaching seen to be so dilute and devoid of 'distinctive' content that there was little of positive value in it.

beginning or end of the school day), the first, albeit limited, moves towards the concept of religion as a subject of the curriculum can be seen to have been taken. Thus it has been said that,

> 'The Education Act of 1870 has proved to be a watershed in religious education. . . To read the records of debates in the early years of the school boards is to gain the impression that the labour had often been extremely painful, and the infant weak and sickly. The Forsters, Dales and Chamberlains of those days could hardly have suspected that they were witnessing the birth of a new and enduring element in the curriculum of state schools.'[18]

Had there been less confusion of aims at this time, the progress towards the full recognition of religious instruction as a subject of the curriculum would probably have been quicker. As it was, the 1870 Act with its confusion of instructional and 'ecclesiastical' aims, may be seen to have sowed the seeds of much later confusion in thinking about Religious Education[19]. This confusion of aims was still reflected in some of the Agreed Syllabuses up to ninety years later[20].

The Education Act of 1902

The next major Education Act was passed in 1902. Although many had hoped that the 1870 Act would solve the religious problem, and indeed the provisions of the Cowper-Temple clause had gone some

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18 Hilliard, F.H., 'Religion in the schools' in Department of Education and Science, Trends in Education, 1870-1970, H.M.S.O., 1970, p.56.

19 In the voluntary schools, both of these aims applied to religious teaching, whereas in the Board schools, the aim was intended to be merely instructional. However, the mobility of teachers between the different types of schools meant that these aims quickly became confused. (cf. The Fourth R, National Society and S.P.C.K., 1970, p.7).

20 See chapter 11, where the aims of various syllabi will be discussed in detail.

way towards dispelling the discord between the denominations on this matter, there was still a considerable amount of dissatisfaction with the resultant teaching of religion. As stated in a proposed amendment to the 1870 Act,

> 'This house is of the opinion that no measure for the elementary education of the people will afford a satisfactory or permanent settlement which leaves the question of religious instruction in schools supported by public funds and rates to be determined by local authorities'[21]

The root of the problem in 1902 was described by Mr. A.J. Balfour, then Prime Minister,

> 'We are agreed about secular education. We are not agreed about religious education . . . We have, as a community, repudiated responsibility for teaching a particular form of religion . . As we have . . . left to the parents the responsibility of chosing what religion their children are to learn, surely we ought . . to make our system as elastic as we can in order to meet their wishes.'[22]

With the establishment of local education authorities under the 1902 Act[23], many voluntary schools were brought under the State system, although retaining the right to give denominational religious instruction[24]. The Cowper-Temple clause remained in force for schools wholly maintained by the local education authorities.

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21 Verbatim report of debate in parliament, during progress of the Elementary Education Bill, p.11., cited in Curtis, S.J. op.cit. p.277.

22 Hansard, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), Vol.CV, col.856.

23 See Appendix 2 for summary of the relevant provisions of the Act.

24 When considering such statements as this, it is important to remember the relative strengths of the different types of school. In 1902, there were 14,000 voluntary schools and 5,700 Board schools (Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, (Commons), Vol.CV, col.855).

With the 1902 Act, as with that of 1870, it can be argued that Religious Education was being used as a pawn within the political system. This may be seen particularly in the way in which a greater freedom in religious teaching was to be allowed in return for a greater degree of control by the new local education authorities[25]. The provisions of 1902 continued the trends observed in 1870 in a number of ways. Firstly, the allowance of a wider range of religious education in the local authority schools meant, in theory at least, that there was more possibility of the movement of the subject away from the direct sphere of influence of the Churches. Secondly, the removal of the timetable restrictions represented the beginning of a move towards greater parity with other subjects. Nothing significantly new was contributed by the 1902 Act in terms of secularization and Religious Education, rather it strengthened and confirmed the trends already established by the 1870 Act.

1902 - 1944

Although the 1870 and 1902 Education Acts are of considerable importance for the history of Religious Education and of the relationship between Church and School, the major Education Act in this respect is that of 1944. Before considering the provisions and effects of this Act, which is still in force today, it is first necessary to survey the

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25 At this point, however, the careful balance of denominational interests which had been so crucial to the 1870 Act was weakened, in that the Anglicans and Roman Catholics were now assured of a form of aid which would be automatically adjusted to changing costs, and which would be available for any new schools which they might build in the future. This was not the case for other voluntary schools. (cf. Cruickshank, M., Church and State in English Education, Macmillan, 1964, pp.85-6).

changes in the climate of opinion which led up to the 1944 legislation. Whilst in the earlier Acts, the question of religious teaching had been taken for granted as being of importance, and the legislation on Religious Education had really been the means of effecting an uneasy compromise between the voluntary and local authority schools, and hence between Church and state, in the period leading up to 1944, more fundamental questions were beginning to be asked about the subject.

Two reports, the Hadow Report of 1931, dealing with Primary schools[26], and the Spens Report on Secondary schools in 1938[27], reflect the growth of concern about the teaching of religion in schools. Both are concerned with the question of professionalism in the teaching of the subject. The Hadow Report urged that those responsible for the training of teachers should ensure that adequate instruction in the Bible was provided in the training colleges[28]. Hitherto, scant attention had been paid to the training of teachers in religion, although standards varied considerably in different institutions. The assumption was that the teachers' own personal beliefs would suffice as preparation for teaching. The Spens Report saw one of the main problems in the teaching of religion being the lack of professionalism on the part of the teachers[29], and stressed the need for trained and specialist teachers of the subject[30]. The recommendations of these reports were significant

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26 Board of Education, Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School (The Hadow Report), H.M.S.O., 1931.

27 Boards of Education, Secondary Education with special reference to grammar schools and technical high schools, (the Spens Report), H.M.S.O., 1938.

28 Hadow Report, p.124.

29 This followed several moves by the teachers themselves towards a greater professionalism in the teaching of the subject (Spens Report, p.207).

30 The report stated,

> 'We hold that the time is past when the teaching of Scripture could be entrusted to any members of staff who did not object to undertake it, irrespective of some preparatory training' (ibid., p.210).

in helping Religious Education to move towards parity with other subjects, where teacher training and specialism was regarded as essential. Both reports also saw religious instruction as being an important element of the school curriculum in its own right[31]. This thought was developed particularly by the Spens Report, which in many ways laid the foundations for the thinking of the 1944 Education Act (The possible influence of contemporary political events in leading to the religious clauses of the 1944 Act will be discussed below). The Spens Report drew the important distinction between Religious Instruction (the report used the term 'Scripture') and the wider concept of Religious Education[32]. Such clarification of the distinction between the cognitive and attitudinal elements within the teaching of religion was long overdue. The members of the committee were also anxious to emphasise that the teaching of the Bible alone was not enough to constitute Religious Education.

> '. . . It is also true that no boy or girl can be counted as properly educated unless he or she has been made aware of the existence of a religious interpretation of life.'[33]

The Spens Report continues and reinforces the trend, already described, of the movement of Religious Education away from the sphere of the Churches. This was given especial impetus by the emphasis on teacher-training, with the hope that there would be a body of non-clerical specialists in religion. It was Spens that firmly established Religious

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31 cf. Hadow Report, p.127.
32 Spens Report, p.170.
33 ibid., p.208.

Education as a subject of the curriculum, examinable and to be professionally taught[34].

The mood reflected in the discussions leading up to the 1944 Education Act represents a move away from the calm statements of educational aims found in the Spens Report to something more closely akin to patriotic fervour. In the light of the contemporary events of the prevailing state of war, this is in no sense surprising but it does tend to distort the picture of the growth and development of the concept of Religious Education as a school subject. The words of Scott Lidgett in 1939 are fairly typical of the contemporary attitude,

> 'If the (moral) values for which democracy stands are to be upheld, this can only be done by a like inculcation of the Faith, which underlies and inspires the pursuit of Righteousness, Reason and Humanity as the vital interests of true civilization.'[35]

After the outbreak of war, the same theme was taken up by the Times,

> 'More than ever before, it has become clear that the healthy life of a nation must be based upon spiritual principles. . . . Christianity cannot be imbibed from the air. It is not a philosophy but a historic religion wich must dwindle unless the facts upon which it is founded are taught and such teaching made the centre of our educational system . . . . It will be of little use to fight . . . for the preservation of Christian principles if Christianity itself is to have no future.'[36]

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34 This report is also significant in its movement away from a 'confessional' or 'ecclesiastical' aim in Religious Education. These aims will be considered fully below (ch.11) in the discussion of the development of the aims and content of Religious Education.

35 Lidgett, J.S., 'Religious Education', Contemporary Review, CLV, 1939, p.148. This statement bears marked similarities to the general thought in Eliot's The Idea of a Christian Society, published in the same year.

36 The Times, Feb. 17th, 1940, p.7.

Such was the prevailing feeling in the years leading up to the passing of the 1944 Education Act. Thus, the White Paper preceding the Bill spoke of the general wish that Religious Education should be given a more clearly defined place in the school curriculum, this wish,

> 'springing from the desire to revive the spiritual and personal values in our society and in our national tradition'[37]

The Education Act of 1944

The 1944 Education Act firmly established the place and importance of both school worship and religous instruction, stating,

> 'The school day in every county school and every voluntary school shall begin with collective worship on the part of all pupils ..'[38]
> '. . religious instruction shall be given in every county school and every voluntary school . .'[39]

There was again to be no distinctive denominational teaching in county schools[40]. A new element was that, under the Act, local education authorities were empowered and encouraged to set up Agreed Syllabus committees for Religious Education[41], the hope being that the ecumenical constitution of these committees would help to smooth over the earlier fears and problems of denominational teaching.

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37 White Paper, Educational Reconstruction, Cmd 6458, para.36, p.11. Similar feelings were also expressed in the opening debate on the Bill in July, 1943 (e.g. the speech of Mr. Denman, Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, (Commons) Vol.CCCLXXXXI, col.1882.)

38 The Statutes, XXVI,s.25 (i).

39 ibid., s.25 (ii). For a summary of the relevant provisions of the Act see Appendix 2.

40 There were to be allowances for special provision in remote schools (ibid., s.26).

41 ibid., s.29.

The 1944 Act also had the effect of modifying the Dual System in a number of respects important for later developments. The state was now responsible for three categories of voluntary schools, voluntary aided[42], special agreement[43], and voluntary controlled[44]. By these provisions, many voluntary schools were brought more closely within the State system, but at the same time the distinctive ethos of many Church schools was preserved by the Act. The importance of these sections of the Act must be seen against the background of the fact that in 1944 half the schools in England and Wales were under some type of voluntary management[45].

The 1944 Education Act and its Religious Education clauses are still in operation, and with all the changes in society and in attitudes which have occurred since that time, have been the cause of continuing debate and controversy. At the time of the passing of the Act, public reaction seems to have been generally favourable, although the only real evidence is restricted to the opinions of members of the teaching profession[46]. The survey providing this evidence seems to suggest that the teachers were prepared to go further in the establishment of Religious Education as an academic subject of the curriculum than the formulations of the Act provided[47]. The tone of the Parliamentary debates prior to the passing of the Act shows that it was believed that

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42 In such schools, the managers were to pay most of the costs of the maintenance of the fabric. These schools would remain fully within the control of the managers, and hence, in most cases would remain fully denominational.

43 In practice these schools were much the same as the voluntary-aided schools, although the arrangments were made on a more ad hoc basis.

44 In voluntary controlled schools, the school was surrendered to the local education authority, and the Church authorities would provide only one-third of the managers. In return for this, denominational teaching was allowed to be given on not more than two occasions per week (ibid., s.27 (i)), and certain 'reserved teachers' could be appointed for this purpose (ibid., s.27 (ii)).

45 cf. Cruickshank, M., op.cit., p.138.

46 Mass Observation, 'Teachers and Religious Education', Times Educational Supplement, March 11th, 1944, p.123.

favourable views on the subject were not restricted to the teachers.

> 'In 1944, belief in the basic Christianity of the British is constantly aired in the House of Commons: 'a vast body of persons', 'millions of humble people' desire that 'Christianity should be an integral and honoured part of the citizen's education' . . . while Colegate thinks that 'if you would have a plebiscite of parents over 95% would vote for compulsory worship!'[48]

As has already been suggested, the true significance of the religious clauses of the 1944 Education Act must be seen in the light of the contemporary war situation. Was Britain in 1944 really so Christian as the Parliamentary debates might imply, or were the sentiments expressed there largely a reaction to the dire circumstances of the day? It is interesting to note that these debates, with their expressions of certainty and affirmations of traditional Christian belief are exactly contemporary with Bonhoeffer's prison letters, with all their doubts and probings towards a new and secular understanding of the Gospel[49]. Whether or not later changes and developments may legitimately be regarded as a secularization of Religious Education depends to a large extent on how far the attitudes expressed in 1944 were a true reflection of current religious feelings. This is, of course, impossible to assess, and moreover, the real question is not whether the feelings expressed at the time were genuine, which they almost certainly were, but rather, whether they would have been a

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47 There were limits to this enthusiasm however, such as the unwillingness of the teachers to have Religious Education inspected on the same basis as other subjects.

48 Cannon, C., 'The influence of religion on educational policy', 1902-1944', British Journal of Educational Studies, XII (2), 1964, pp. 151-2

49 cf. chapter 4.

true reflection of the mood of the age had the war not occurred.

The first important issue would seem to be that in the Parliamentary debates there was a real concern for basic religious issues. Cannon[50] has demonstrated the difference between these debates and those of 1902, when the real concern was with political questions. Her argument is based upon the great number of speakers who refer to specifically religious matters[51], as well as on the general tone of the debates[52]. It would seem indisputable that the legislators were genuine in the feelings they expressed. This leads on to the second issue, namely whether those feelings adequately reflected the mood of the people as a whole. In the Bampton Lectures for 1946, Spencer Leeson[53] described the concern for religion as existing at all levels of society. He diagnosed the mood of the time as being that,

> 'Our country is by tradition Christian, owes to Christian infuence the noblest features in a still deeply imperfect civilization; . . . until recently she was not deeply concerned to remain Christian, and, apart from small circles of devotees in every Church, was mainfestly losing her grip on the essentials of the faith . . the challenge offered to all this by the strident assertions of revolutionary philosophy in Russia and Italy and Germany has at length aroused in us a deep

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50 Cannon, C., op.cit.

51 'In the Commons second reading, 24 out of 31 speakers refer to religion, 18 of them substantially; in the House of Lords, 22 out of 28 speakers give a large part of their speeches to it' (ibid., p.152).

52 'The religious tone of the whole Commons debate is set by Mr. Butler, who gives it a central place in the opening speech, by quoting both the Prayer Book and a hymn. It is continued by Mr. Ede, Parliamentary Secretary for Education, who closes the second reading with a hymn he sang in Church as a child. The same spirit is shown in all the speeches of Lord Selbourne, who pilots the Bill through the Lords'. (ibid., p.153).

53 Leeson, S., Christian Education, Longmans, 1947.

> spiritual uneasiness, a searching for a purpose in life, and for something to which we can anchor our general sense of neighbourly decency with a certainty that it will hold'[54]

Was this a correct analysis of the situation, or were such leaders suffering from the same sort of delusion about Britain being a Christian country as later compilers of Agreed Syllabi have been accused of[55]? It seems possible to argue that the whole mood of the time was totally artificial[56], attitudes having been distorted by the horrors of war. It would seem that the politicians may have snatched at Religious Education in their very understandable attempts to reconstruct a better society in the post-war era. The importance of the new status given to Religious Education by the 1944 Act must be balanced by this consideration.

> 'The fact that religous education was given such prominence in the 1944 Education Act was, in one sense, the measure of the stature which it had attained at mid-century. It was also an indication of the determination of a nation locked in its most desperate struggle for survival that its children should be brought up with a clear notion of the personal and civic ideals for which the Second World War was being waged. The nation turned instinctively to religious education as the principal means by which schools could play their part in laying the necessary spiritual and moral foundations of the generation which was to some.'[57]

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54 ibid., pp.217-8.

55 'It seems quite obvious that the committees responsible for drawing up the Agreed Syllabuses in the decade following the Butler Act were all suffering from one major delusion, namely that Britain was a Christian country. Their basic assumption, again conscious or otherwise, was that the children of this land were about to embark on a carefully organised study of the Christian heritage that was already theirs.' (Alves, C., 'Religious teaching in schools', Theology, LXVII, 1964, p.430).

56 cf. Niblett, W.R., 'The Religious Education clauses of the 1944 Act; aims, hopes and fulfilment', in Wedderspoon, A., Religious Education 1944-84, Allen and Unwin, 1966, pp.25-6.

57 Hilliard, F.H., op.cit., p.59.

Whilst Hilliard's interpretation of the situation is accepted as a basis for the understanding of the 1944 Act, it would seem that one should go further, and accept the suggestion made by Niblett that the secularizing tendencies of the post-war years merely continued a trend which was well-established before the war, and had been interrupted by the outbreak of hostilities[58]. The idea of Victorian England as having been a 'golden age' of religious activity has already been challenged[59]. Any relative 'boom' that there might have been may be said to have ceased at the end of the last century. The drift away from religious practice and belief had been noted in 1909[60], when it was commented,

> 'The tide is ebbing within and without the Churches. The drift is towards a non-dogmatic affirmation of general kindliness and good fellowship, with an emphasis rather on the service of men than on the fulfilment of the will of God . . . The children are everywhere persuaded to attend the centres of religious teaching, everywhere as they struggle to manhood and womanhood in a world of such doubtful certainties, they exhibit a large falling away.'[61]

All these trends of decline would appear to have been well-established by 1944[62], thus substantiating Niblett's claim of artificiality.

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58 Niblett, W.R., op.cit.

59 Chapter 2.

60 Masterman, C.F.G., The Condition of England, 1909, The movement away from religion was noted particularly among the middle-classes, and it was said,

> '. . it continues without violence, continuously, steadily, as a kind of impersonal motion of secular change. It is the passing of a whole civilization away from the faith in which it was founded, and out of which it has been fashioned . . It is not becoming atheist. It is ceasing to believe, without being conscious of the process, until it suddenly wakes up to the fact that the process is complete! (ibid., p.14).

61 ibid., pp.268-9.

62 The decline from the beginning of the century to the outbreak of war has been traced by Wickham, who claims that religion had reached a new low level in the period just before the outbreak of the Second World War. (Wickham, E.R., Church and People in an Industrial City, Lutterworth, 1957, pp.165-213, esp.p.213.)

It is obviously not possible to assess the likelihood of the 1944 Education Act having been passed in its present form without the influence of the war, or to measure the precise effect that the war situation had upon the legislators. It is clear, however, that the emotional and patriotic fervour which was so strongly marked in the debates was genuinely felt and was directed by high motives[63].

> 'No one who recalls the situation and temper of that period can doubt that the decision expressed a sincere and widespread desire to make such a public and official acknowledgement of the Christian basis of education as one contribution to making good the moral wastage of the war years.'[64]

The vital word in this statement would seem to be 'moral'. Was it really religious education that the formulators of the 1944 Act were aiming for, or moral education[65]? An awareness of this confusion may be central to an understanding of whether the Act was really meeting the desires of the age. That moral education was at least a major part of their aims is apparent from several of the early Agreed Syllabi. Thus it was stated in the foreword to a 1946 syllabus,

> 'It is not in man's nature to live without personal values, good or evil, and it is the first duty of a civilized community to ensure that its people are taught to recognise those ultimate values of truth and beauty and goodness . . . . If our culture is to survive, we must take positive steps to see that no nation is left spiritually and morally

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63 cf. White paper, Educational Reconstruction, Cmd 6458, 1943, p.11, para.36.

64 Cockin, F.A., 'The Education Act comes of age', Theology, LXVIII, 1965, p.316.

65 cf. Whitfield, G., 'Parliament, the Church and education', Crucible, Nov. - Dec. 1971, p.174.

> defenceless again . . . The recognition of ultimate values implies a religious interpretation of life . . . under the Education Act 1944, it becomes the duty of local education authorities to contribute towards the spiritual and moral, as well as the mental and physical development of the community . . .'[66]

It is clear that this represents a view of Religious Education as a 'carrier' of moral education[67]; on this basis it is natural that the development of the former should be seen as a means of promoting the latter.

In the period since 1944, there has been pressure from many quarters for the removal of the classes in the Act which make Religious Education compulsory. This pressure comes not only from those who are opposed to any form of teaching religion[68], but also from some who are deeply concerned for and involved with R.E., because of the anomalous position created by the fact that R.E. is the only compulsory subject on the curriculum. On the whole, however, despite occasional public outbursts against the subject[69], there would appear to be general acceptance of the status quo. When controversy does arise over the subject, it is frequently because of some aspect

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66 County Borough of Barrow-in-Furness Education Committee, Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education, 1946, p.5.

67 This depends on the much wider question of the relationship between religion and morals, and discussion of this will not be undertaken here. The question of the rise of moral education as an independent area of the curriculum will be considered in ch.11 as an example of differentiation.

68 e.g., the British Humanist Association and the National Secular Society. Not all Humanists are totally opposed to the teaching of religion in schools, although most would wish to see the element of compulsion removed (cf., B.H.A., Objective, Fair, and Balanced; a new law for religion in education, London, 1975).

69 In such arguments, there is often a confusion between school worship, against which many would protest for a variety of reasons, and classroom R.E.

of the content rather than over the basic issue of whether R.E. should be taught[70]. Whilst there is no cause for complacency about the future of the subject[71] (and its status is still not fully recognised in some cases[72]) R.E. is at least now in the position where it can attempt to justify itself on the same grounds and in the same way as other areas of the curriculum.

There have been a number of minor modifications to the law regarding the position and status of voluntary schools since 1944[73], and the discontinuance of direct-grant aid to schools under voluntary management[74], has removed one of the means of co-operation between Church and state in education. For the most part, it may be said that co-operation between the various bodies concerned has increased, both in terms of the growth of understanding between the various denominations concerned, and in terms of the development of state support for Religious Studies at various levels[75]. In this situation, however, it is quite clear that the state is the main provider of

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70 A major example of this is the controversy over the 1975 Birmingham Agreed Syllabus. (cf. Hull, J., 'Agreed Syllabuses, past, present and future', in Smart, N., and Horder, D., New Movements in Religious Education, Temple Smith, 1975, pp.108-12 for summary of the Birmingham controversy, and Lockhart, L.B., 'A new programme for Christian education', The Times, July 5th, 1975, for part of the 'public' reaction).

71 cf. C.E.M., Digest, IX, 1975, for a statement of the pessimistic view of the future of R.E.

72 This lack of status may be seen in terms of timetabling and salary grading when compared with other subjects of an equal workload. (cf. C.E.M., Adequate Provision: R.E. in secondary schools, London, 1975).

73 The Education Act of 1959 increased the grants payable to voluntary schools, and provided for 75% grants for the building of new secondary schools to cope with children from primary schools of the same denomination. A further increase in grant was made in the Education Act of 1967. (cf. Murphy, J., op.cit., pp.119-26).

74 cf. Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, (Commons) vol.888, 1975, cols.271-83.

75 There is a wide range of provision, from the Schools Council projects in Primary and Secondary schools to local education authority grants to prospective ordinands.

education, and that any arrangements with voluntary bodies are additional to its main task.

That there is such lack of controversy in the provision of education may be due in part, but only in part, to the growth of ecumenism. Ecumenical voluntary schools are rare[76], although this is not surprising, as education seems to be an area in which denominationalism is still strong. That religious questions are not a cause of controversy in education would seem to reflect the fact that education is now almost fully secularised, and differentiated from religion. It is debated whether it is even logically possible to think of a Christian approach to education[77], but for the majority, theological questions do not enter into a discussion of education. It has been claimed[78] that the lack of religous controversy in education is also a reflection of the general secularization of society, in that the religious issues which were once the cause of so much contention are now no longer of importance to many people. This argument, however, suffers from all the problems of the decline theory[79] in that it is very difficult to tell how important these issues really were at the time for the population as a whole. Since, at the end of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century education was largely in the hands of the churches, and this control was being eroded, it was natural that religious issues should figure largely in the debates of the time.

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76 cf. Morant, R.W., 'The case for the ecumenical comprehensive school', Learning for Living, XIII (1), 1973, pp.16-9.

77 That such an approach is not possible is the view of Hirst (Moral Education in a Secular Society, University of London Press, 1974, esp.ch.5). This is challenged directly by Hull ('Christian theology and educational theory; can there be connections?' British Journal of Educational Studies, XXIV (2), 1976, pp.127-43)

78 Murphy, J., op.cit., p.126.

79 cf.ch.2.

CHAPTER 11

THE AIMS AND CONTENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Introduction

The previous chapter considered the role of R.E. in the context of the changing relationships between Church and state, especially in the sphere of education. In this chapter, the place of R.E. in schools will be taken as a constant, which is, in theory at least, the case since the 1944 Education Act[1]. The variables to be examined will be the aims and content of the subject, mainly, although not exclusively, as reflected in the Agreed Syllabi of the various local education authorities[2].

The question of the place of R.E. in a society undergoing the process of secularization is a question of a rather different order from that of the place of worship in such a situation, for a number of major differences are involved. Firstly, worship is voluntary, but education is compulsory, and R.E. legally required under the 1944 Act. (There is, of course, the conscience clause, allowing parents to withdraw their children from R.E., but this sometimes causes embarassment for the child, in appearing 'different' from his peers, or there may be other practical difficulties in accommodating the child during the R.E. period. Further difficulties may arise in

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1 Here, as in chapter 10, reference will be to the situation in England and Wales only. The aims of R.E. in Scotland will be considered briefly in ch.15.

2 The abbreviation A.S. will henceforward be employed in this chapter for Agreed Syllabus. See appendix 2 for the provisions of the 1944 Act, especially regarding the statutes governing the procedures for the drawing up of the A.S. It is recognised here that there is often a gulf between the theory of the syllabus and the practice of the schools, but, by its nature, the A.S. is more of 'grass-roots' document than many other works on the subject.

situations where R.E. is fully integrated with other areas of the curriculum[3].) Secondly, whilst the form of Church worship may vary, the ultimate aim remains more or less unchanged, but the aims and content of R.E. may change considerably. The third difference is in methodology. Whilst worship is beginning to change slowly, and evidence of these changes may come from direct observation, reports of participants or from published materials[4], the changes in R.E. have been much more dramatic, and are also much more widespread, and easier to assess from published works. By the nature of the place of R.E. within the wider educational framework, its developments are also subject to more regular and systematic critical scrutiny than are the developments in worship. In the light of these differences, a full discussion of the place of R.E. within a secular society (paralleling the earlier discussion of worship in that context) will not be undertaken, as, with the changing aims of the subject (see below) the religious stance taken by society as a whole bears little relationship to the aims and content of religious teaching in schools. So, for example, such statements as Niblett's that an entirely secular society could not give R.E.[5] would appear to be based on a rather limited concept both of R.E. and of the nature of a secular society.

The aims and content of R.E. will be discussed here. Greater emphasis will be placed on aims, as these provide the criteria for the choice of content, and reflect the understanding of the nature of the

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3 This is particularly true of the Primary School. See below for discussion of the thematic approach.

4 The comment in note (2) on the relationship between theory and practice is also relevant here. However, despite the fact that there would still seem to be some places in which R.E. consists in the telling of Bible stories, in general most schools have passed through some, if not all of the stages of R.E. which will be described below.

5 Niblett, W.R., 'Religious Education in a secular society', Learning for Living, VI (3), 1967, p.7.

subject as a whole. One problem here is that whilst educational thought in recent years has demanded clarity in aims and in the processes of curriculum planning, there is a lack of statements of aim in many of the earlier syllabi, and thus in some cases these have to be surmised from the content.

The term 'R.E.' has so far been employed to denote the subject taught in schools. This is a fairly modern term, and in many of the earlier A.S. the subject is variously referred to as 'Scripture', 'Bible', 'Religious Instruction', 'Religious Knowledge' or, in some cases, even as 'Divinity'. Each of these titles in some way reflects an approach to the aims and content of the subject. So, for example, a wide ranging study of religion could hardly be expected within a subject called 'Scripture', and there are significant educational differences between the titles 'Religious Instruction', 'Religious Knowledge' and 'Religious Education'. A title more recently adopted by some schools is 'Religious Studies', which reflects the type of aim and content classified below as the phenomenological approach. Such changes in title are a microcosm of the changes occurring in the understanding of the subject as a whole.

The Aims of Religious Education

Aims in education can be considered at various levels, from the aims of education as a whole, down to the aims of a particular lesson. The type of aims to be considered here come between these two extremes, being the aims of teaching within a particular area of the curriculum, and such aims are likely to include cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural goals.

Aims in R.E. may be categorised in a number of ways. The classi-

fication which will be employed here divides aims into the confessional, ecclesiastical, social/moral, neo-confessional/personal quest, phenomenological and cultural heritage approaches[6]. Not all aims, of course, fit neatly into this classification. Furthermore, they do not fall into a strict chronological sequence, although it is possible, for example, to draw lines of development from the confessional through the neo-confessional to the phenomenological approaches. Frequently, different types of aims may be found to be contemporary with each other, and these factors will necessarily affect the subsequent discussion of their implications for secularization.

The Confessional Aim

This is the most common of the 'traditional' approaches. Its view of the purpose of R.E. may be summarised from as recent a publication as the Plowden Report[7], which stated that,

> 'children should be taught to know and love God, and to practise in the schools the virtues appropriate to their age and environment.'[8]

The assumptions underlying this approach would seem to be that the work of the school was merely an extension of that of the Church. In the light of the way in which religious teaching had been used in the process of the state taking increased powers over voluntary education, this was not an unreasonable assumption prior to 1944. Thus, statements

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6 For other forms of classification of aims, cf. Schools Council Working Paper 36, Religious Education in Secondary schools, Evans/Methuen Education, 1971, and Grimmitt, M., What can I do in R.E.? Mayhew McCrimmon, 1973, pp.16-32.

7 Children and their Primary Schools, H.M.S.O., 1967.

8 ibid., vol 1, p.207, para.572.

of aim emanating from the pre-1944 period must be seen against this background. So the claim that,

> 'the teachers' supreme duty is to enable their pupils to know and love the person, Jesus Christ'[9],

as well as the view of the teacher having to have,

> 'the gift of winning the hearts as well as the minds of their pupils'[10],

belong to this context.

However, after the passing of the 1944 Education Act, similar 'confessional' aims were still to be found in many of the A.S. Although few are as explicit as the Lincolnshire Syllabus of 1964, which describes itself as an 'evangelistic instrument'[11], many others implicitly share this aim[12]. In the 1960's such traditional concepts of R.E. received a major challenge from the 'personal quest' approach, which will be considered more fully below. Although this did not affect the explicitly confessional aims of many syllabi, it did oblige them to clarify their position, and to relate their aims to the wider aims of the educational process. Thus, while the Oxford Handbook of 1963[13] stated that,

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9 Braley, E.F., The Teaching of Religion, Longmans, 1938, p.35.

10 Heaton, Ellis W., Religion in Secondary Day Schools, Epworth, 1941. This thought is paralleled by Arundale, R.L., Religious Education in the Senior School, Nelson, 1944, p.9, where it is said that the teacher must ask himself,
'Am I turning out pupils merely packed with facts and dogma, or pupils who have a lively desire to 'confess the faith of Christ crucified'?. . .'

11 Lincolnshire Education Committee, A.S. of R.I., 1964, p.10. This syllabus is in some ways more explicitly confessional than its predecessor of 1951.

12 These include: Surrey County Council Education Committee, Syllabus of R.I., 1947; Cambridgeshire Education Committee, A.S. of R.I. 1949; City of Norwich Education Committee, A.S. of R.I., 1951; Carlisle, Cumberland and Westmoreland, A.S. of R.I., 1951; City of Portsmouth Education Authority, Syllabus of R.I., 1952, and City of Birmingham Education Committee, A.S. of R.I., 1962.

13 City of Oxford, Handbook on Religious Education, O.U.P., 1963. The actual syllabus in use was Cambridgeshire, 1949.

'the syllabus itself is unashamedly Christian'[14],

it is doubtful whether any such profession would have been needed in many of the earlier syllabi where the fact would have been assumed without question[15]. Others, in their emphasis that their aim is to provide more than mere factual knowledge, reveal their confessional approach more indirectly. The syllabus of the North Western C.S.E. Board states its aim to be,

> 'not simply to present the Bible as a record of historical events, but to bring children into an encounter with Jesus Christ.'[16]

In general terms, the attitude of many confessional syllabi may be summarised thus,

> 'we speak of Religious Education, but we mean Christian Education . . . . . The aim of Christian Education in its full and proper sense is quite simply to confront our children with Jesus Christ.'[17]

The confessional aim may be seen to have its roots in the period when R.E. may legitimately have been regarded as an extension of the work of the Church. In most cases it is based on the assumption that society as a whole is Christian, and that the role of R.E. is therefore

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14 ibid., p.3.

15 This is especially true of the very early syllabi such as that of Hampshire County Council, Syllabus of R.I. for use in County Schools, 1923.

16 cited in Schools Council Working Paper, 36, p.9.

17 Birmingham, 1962, p.8. Others which share the same basic approach include the East Midlands C.S.E., Board, The Gittins Report, Primary Education in Wales, H.M.S.O., 1967, Lancashire Education Committee, Religion and Life, 1968, and Northamptonshire Education Committee, A.S. of R.E., Fullness of Life, 1968.

that of the 'Christian nurture' of children[18]. The lack of 'confessional' approaches in more recent syllabi and other publications, may, at first sight, be taken as evidence of the decline hypothesis. This could be argued both on the grounds that the decline of the Church would inevitably mean the decline of its influence over education, and, in more general ways, that there is no longer a common consent concerning the desirability of the acceptance of Christianity by schoolchildren. However, while this is to some extent true, to relate the decline of the confessional approach too closely to this type of secularization is to overlook other factors. The concept of 'conformity' is of equal significance, in that it is now widely recognised and accepted that R.E. must be justified on educational and no other grounds[19]. R.E. is thus brought under the same conditions as other aspects of education. In this situation, in the light of current educational principles, the confessional approach would clearly not be acceptable[20]. Furthermore, the revitalisation of Religious Studies through the phenomenological approach[21] and the 'differentiation' of Religious Studies from commitment and from the Church form part of the wider picture against which the decline of the confessional approach must be viewed.

The confessional approach also raises important questions about the role of the teacher.

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18 On this concept, cf. Gray, J., What about the Children?, S.C.M., 1970, esp. ch.1.

19 cf. Cox, E., 'Educational Religious Education', Learning for Living, X (4), 1971, pp.3-5.

20 cf. Loukes, H., 'Pluralist Education', in Taylor, M., Progress and Problems in Moral Education , N.F.E.R., 1975, p.210.

21 see below.

> 'The aim of Christian Education is nothing less than to make Christians. Religious Instruction is no more than a means to that end . . . It is the teachers themselves who are the key to the situation. Only the teachers can transmit Christianity in the schools, and what is not possessed cannot be transmitted . . . The ideal teacher of Religious Knowledge is a Christian and a scholar.'[22]

The question of the Christian commitment of the teacher is not limited to the confessional approach, but is clearly of particular importance if this aim is pursued. In the earlier syllabi such commitment was either assumed (as part of the general belief that all teachers were thus committed) or expected (in the belief that only such teachers would teach the subject). The role of the teacher was thus seen to be that of evangelist.

> 'The subject to be taught is not Biblical knowledge nor morality but the Christian faith, and the aim is to lead the pupils to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ . . To achieve that purpose, the Christian teacher may zealously use all his influence.'[23]

That there should be such expectations of teachers would appear to rest on two grounds, the first being historical. When most education was in the hands of the voluntary agencies, it was natural that teachers came from among the members of the Churches providing the education, and that there should be a strong vocational emphasis[24]. Secondly, it reflected the belief that the practice of religion formed an essential

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22 Jones, C.M., The Methods of Christian Education, S.C.M. Press, 1949, pp.22-3.

23 Lincolnshire, 1964, p.10.

24 This was particularly true where the 'vocation' lay in the task of bringing education to the poorer classes, a task undertaken by many of the voluntary bodies.

part of the culture of the middle-classes, from whose ranks the great majority of teachers were recruited. In the contemporary situation, neither of these is true[25]. The present position reflects a 'differentiation' both of teaching itself and of religious studies in particular from both commitment and from organised religion[26]. But even with the phenomenological approach, there is still a problem of commitment. If one aim of this approach is 'to understand what religion is and what it would mean to take a religion seriously'[27], then some would argue that it is not possible for the teacher either to understand, or to impart understanding, unless he is committed to a religious belief. Others, however, would argue, that strong belief may be an impediment to the objective teaching necessary to this approach[28].

The Ecclesiastical Aim

From the above discussion of the confessional aim, it would appear that R.E. with the aim and intention of 'producing Christians' is no longer possible in the State schools[29]. Many syllabi, however, also expressed another aim, the ecclesiastical, which would appear even less justifiable on educational grounds. It is more specific than the confessional aim, for whilst the latter sees the purpose of R.E. as

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25 The situation is further complicated by the fact that both full-time specialists (who have at least been trained in the subject) and general class teachers (mainly in the Primary school) are expected to teach R.E. today, as well as many others who are expected to help with the teaching of the subject, though often untrained and unwilling.

26 The concept of differentiation will be examined further in discussion of the phenomenological approach.

27 Holm, J., Teaching Religion in School, O.U.P., 1975, p.7

28 cf. Oliver, G., 'Religious Commitment and the Religious Education Teacher', Learning for Living, XIII (5), 1974, pp.181-3, for a discussion of some of the problems involved.

29 cf. Smith, J.W.D., Religious Education in a Secular Setting, S.C.M., 1969, esp. p.68.

being to bring about Christian commitment, the ecclesiastical aim sees its purpose as being to bring children into the active membership of the Church. In a foreword to the Sunderland syllabus of 1944[30], Lord Eustance Percy wrote,

> 'If the child can but taste at school the feeling of Christian community and life and worship, he may go on to seek it for himself elsewhere . . . The school ought to do its positive best to guide children into Church membership just as it would guide them into the continuation school.'[31]

Later in the same syllabus it is stated,

> 'the goal will be a life of worship and service in the Christian community.'[32]

Similar views are to be found in the Lincolnshire and Hampshire A.S.[33].

Many of the comments made on the confessional approach are also applicable to the ecclesiastical. It is doubtful whether this could ever be thought of as a valid aim in a state school today, although its place in a Church school may be upheld[34]. The implications of the decline in this aim may be related to both the decline and the differentiation hypotheses, but it must also be related to the changes

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30 County Borough of Sunderland Education Committee, Syllabus of R.I., University of London Press, 1944.

31 ibid., p.8.

32 ibid., p.13. This statement was adopted in Derbyshire Education Committee Syllabus of Religious Teaching, 1948, p.7.

33 Lincolnshire, 1964 (op.cit) and Hampshire Education Committee, The Syllabus of R.E., Winchester, 1954. The latter states part of its aim to be,
'to make them practising Christians' (p.10).

34 Even with the voluntary, denominational school, there are many problems in the educational justification of this aim, and a distinction between the independent school, day or boarding, where the parents have specifically opted for a particular form of ecclesiastical initiation, and the voluntary school which is also the community school in a particular neighbourhood, drawing children from a variety of backgrounds.

in understanding of the Church, and of what is involved in 'practising membership' of the Church. However, in view of the fact that this aim has had comparatively little place, even in the most confessional of syllabi, little real significance can be attached to its decline, other than in the general terms already indicated for the confessional approach.

The Social/Moral Aim

This aim, although not explicitly stated in many A.S., underlies a number of arguments for the continuance of R.E. in schools. That this understanding of the function of the subject may have been the basis of the religious clauses in the 1944 Education Act has already been suggested in the last chapter.

The 'social/moral' aim[35] is based on the belief that the teaching of religion (taken for granted to be Christianity) will have the automatic by-product of good moral behaviour. This is epitomised in the Surrey syllabus of 1923, which saw the aim of R.E. as being to give,

> 'everyday knowledge concerning the faith . .'

thus helping the children to find principles,

> 'giving guidance in all life's problems and a purpose to all life's actions',

and to help them,

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35 This title has been chosen because although social and moral education as such must be distinguished from each other, they are linked as an aim of Religious Education.

'to use their energies and influence for the welfare of their fellow creatures.'[36]

The same aim was to be seen more clearly after the 1944 Act in the Middlesex A.S.[37], and the Leicester A.S. (1951) sought to create in the pupil,

'the desire to be kind and unselfish, courageous and noble.'[38]

It was made clear in many of these syllabi that their compilers felt that morality was only possible through the teaching of the 'deep things of God'[39], and often the school community itself was seen as the mediator of the morality arising from the Religious Instruction given in more formal contexts[40].

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36 Surrey Education Committee, Regulations for and Syllabus of Religious Instruction in Council Schools, 1923, p.3.

37 Middlesex County Council, A.S. of R.I., 1948. This stated, 'The chief task of the school is to train for Christian citizenship. The whole atmosphere, tradition and curriculum should be directed to this aim, but it is especially important that the direct religious instruction should relate the Bible to modern conditions.' (p.2).

38 Education Committee of the City and County of Leicester, A.S. of R.I., 1951, p.15.

39 cf. Cambridgeshire Syllabus of Religious Teaching for Schools, C.U.P., 1939, pp.4-5. There are close parallels here with the contemporary work of Eliot, T.S., The Idea of a Christian Society, Faber, 1939. Similar views of the function of R.E. are to be found in the Birmingham A.S. of R.I., 1950, p.24.

40 cf. London County Council, The London Syllabus of Religious Education, 1947, This stated that the school provides an environment, 'in which the child may acquire the elementary virtues unconsciously.' (p.21). Such a statement raises many questions concerning the nature of the school community as a whole, and the values implicit in that community. There is a clear difference between the position of a small, traditional grammar school, and some very large urban comprehensive schools in this respect.

Although this aim is not frequently made explicit in more recent publications[41], there is still a strong, though perhaps unconscious view that the teaching of R.E. in schools helps to preserve the status quo.

> 'Even today, the majority of 'men in the street' feel the retention of Christian teaching in schools is important because of the moral influence it brings to bear upon the up-and-coming generations. It helps to keep society 'decent' by inculcating 'decent' standards. Note the phrase is 'keep society decent', not 'make it decent'. Instruction in Christianity, that creed whose followers were once accused of turning the world upside down, is valued as a means of preserving the status quo.'[42]

This confusion or coalescence of the aims of religious and moral education persisted, and, in the late 1960's it appeared that R.E. might, for all practical purposes, become moral education[43]. This has not happened, probably due both to the rise of the phenomenological approach[44], and to the development of moral education as a subject in its own right[45]. This latter development bears certain parallels to the history of R.E., including the arguments for the need for morals to be taught, because of the crisis in authority[46], and also such questions as to whether this teaching is the duty of the home or of the school[47]. Similarly, the pluralist society raises major issues in the teaching of morals, but it also presents the possibility of

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41 The aim of 'development of the pupils' personalities' expressed in the D.E.S. Report on Education, LVIII, H.M.S.O., 1969, is a recent example of the 'socialising' aspect of this aim.

42 Alves, C., 'Religious Education and the role of the Church in society' Faith and Unity, XIV, 1970, p.5.

43 e.g., Cox, E., 'R.E. in the Seventies', Aspects of Education, IX, 1969, p.137.

44 see discussion below.

45 Much of the work in this field comes from the Research Unit of the Farmington Trust, Oxford. Examples of the work may be found inter alia, in Wilson, J., Williams, N., and Sugarman, B., Introduction to Moral Education, Pelican, 1967, and McPhail, P., Lifeline, Longman, 1974, (the Schools Council M.E. project materials for use in secondary schools. The project does not advocate the teaching of M.E. as a separate subject.)

46 Wilson, et al., op.cit., p.14.

47 ibid., p.401.

understanding certain forms of behaviour, rather than merely accepting them as part of the culture[48].

Traditionally, morality and religion have been very closely linked, and thus it was understandable that the moral teaching in school should be particularly associated with that of religion. The recent separate development of R.E. and Moral Education as independent, though related areas of the curriculum, would seem to represent a prima facie case of 'differentiation' (Shiner's third category), R.E. being restricted to the study of the 'religious' elements[49]. The establishment of Moral Education as a subject in its own right also means, by implication at least, a narrowing of the sphere of influence of religion. Although this argument must necessarily be seen against the background of other contemporary changes in the role and concept of R.E.[50], it nevertheless represents a part of the general secularization of the subject. Furthermore, the very problems and arguments which can arise as to the content of moral education represent a lack of any consensus morality in society as a whole. This, in turn, may mean that the recent development of Moral Education is, in part, a reaction to secularization; in this case, in the sense of a decline in adherence to traditional values[51].

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48 cf. Loukes, H., 'Pluralist education', in Taylor, M., Progress and Problems in Moral Education, pp.212-4.

49 This argument is stronger in a situation where R.E. consists of 'pure' Religious Studies than in one where the usual diverse cluster of social, theological, ethical and historical materials is still to be found.

50 Again, if R.E. is still seen as in some sense, an extension of the work of the Church, or as the domain of Christian teachers within the school, then the separation of M.E. is more significant than it would be in the more 'open' situation advocated in much contemporary thought on R.E.

51 cf. discussion in ch.2 under the transposition theory.

The Neo-Confessional Aim/Personal Quest

Although, as has been shown above, the confessional, ecclesiastical and moral aims are logically and practically distinct from each other, they are closely related, and to some extent the latter two have often been subsumed under the confessional aim. The next major development was of the 'neo-confessional' aim[52]. This has been described as the attempt,

> 'to make 'confessional' or dogmatic religious education more acceptable and effective by improving methods and techniques in accordance with the findings of educational research, and especially by constructing syllabuses based on the capacities, needs and interests of the pupils. These attempts are usually liberal in intention, and at the secondary level their approach is often described as 'open-ended'. However, this is an 'open-ended' approach to Christianity.'[53]

This approach is here linked with that of 'personal quest'[54], (that is, the idea that each child should be helped to enter into his own 'quest' for meaning in life), because, in both cases, despite the apparent 'open-endedness' of approach, the hope is still that Christianity will be embraced. In both cases, the work of Goldman[55] provided the basis of the materials and aims developed.

This aim plays an important part in the thinking of the major educational reports of the early 1960's. The Crowther report[56] stated,

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52 This title is taken from Schools Council Working Paper, 36, p.30.
53 ibid.
54 The use of this phrase in this context originates with Loukes, H., New Ground in Christian Education, S.C.M., 1965, esp. ch.8.
55 e.g. Readiness for Religion, and Religious Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence, R.K.P., 1965. The 'neo-confessional' element is most clear in the series of books and work-cards for primary children edited by Goldman, Readiness for Religion, Hart-Davies Educational, 1966 & 1967.
56 15-18, H.M.S.O., 1959.

> 'The teenagers with whom we are concerned need, perhaps before all else, to find a faith to live by. They will not all find exactly the same faith, and some will not find any. Education can and should play some part in their search. It can assure them that there is something to search for and it can show them where to look, and what other men have found.'[57]

Fairly similar aims were expressed in the Newsom Report[58].

In one sense, this approach may be said to be a response to secularization, in that it recognised that commitment was not an automatic process, nor one of which all children came from homes in which religion was accepted and practised, and that they therefore needed a wide range of educational experiences and stimuli to help them to see the importance of this quest. This aim also reflects in part some of the theological changes associated with secularization. Loukes[59] saw the crux of the problem of R.E. as being the same as the problem of contemporary theological debate - how to speak of God in natural or secular terms. Thus, the task of demythologising has to be undertaken by the teacher, and the content of R.E. thus becomes,

> '. . the depth, the realisation of everything, the experience of the whole, the living and the human, alongside the categorisation and the analysis, the selection and abstraction, that constitute academic disciplines.'[60]

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57 ibid., vol.I, p.44.

58 Central Advisory Council, Half our Future, H.M.S.O., 1963, pp.55-6.
'The best schools give their pupils something which they do not get elsewhere, something which they know they need when they receive it, though they had not realised this lack before. We believe that this can be, and usually is, given in a way which does justice to the mixed society in which we live, recognising the range and degrees of religious belief and practice to be found in it, and respecting the right of the individual conscience to be provided with the material on which freely to decide its path.'

59 op.cit., p.101.

60 ibid., p.148.

This quest also inevitably involves a general broadening of horizons, and the awakening of children's minds to new areas of thought[61], but the 'freedom' of the quest is also constantly emphasised. This attitude has been summarised as,

> 'the giving to children of a religious view of life and then allowing them freely to make up their own minds how that view shall express itself both in belief and practice.'[62]

This 'new' approach to R.E. first found official recognition in the West Riding of Yorkshire A.S. (1966)[63]. The ultimate aim would still seem to be that the children should accept the general values of Christianity, and recognise its significance, but not necessarily that they should all be personally committed to it (though this is clearly thought to be desirable). This syllabus was the first to take account of the full implications of developmental psychology[64], and the emphasis is on discovery and the child's own search for knowledge and understanding rather than on superimposed beliefs. Other syllabi following this approach include that of the Inner London Education Authority[65], which is,

> 'not only concerned with Christianity as an abstract concept, but with what it means in every sense to be religiously committed.'[66]

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61 cf. Alves, C., Religion in the Secondary School, S.C.M., 1968, where the aim of R.E. is stated to be,
'to open the eyes of pupils to values which would otherwise lie outside their field of vision. These values come to us as part of a living tradition according to which we believe that God is active in human experience. Schools have a duty . . . to enable them to feel the strength and the challenge which it offers.' (p.14).

62 Cox, E., Changing Aims in Religious Education, R.K.P., 1966, p.68.

63 West Riding of Yorkshire, Suggestions for Religious Education, 1966.

64 especially the work of Goldman (op.cit.)

65 I.L.E.A., Learning for Life, 1968.

66 ibid., p.9. The Kent A.S. (Kent Council of R.E., A Handbook of Thematic Material, 1968) takes a similar approach in its stress on opening 'a path to freely chosen commitment' (p.3.), but elsewhere this A.S. still has heavy overtones of the confessional approach.

A significant methodological feature arising out of, though not confined to this aim is the 'thematic approach'. This approach is inter-disciplinary, and, taking one theme or topic, examines all its facets and implications[67]. However, in the case of much early material this could still be regarded as a means to a confessional end[68], assuming that by the clarification of a concept or image, and by relating it to other areas of study, the religious implications would become acceptable to the child. Thus, such themes were used to lead up to the Christian teaching[69]. This criticism, however, is mostly only applicable to the early use of themes as 'life themes'. The method has more recently been applied on a broader basis, and is now an established part of educational practice, particularly in the Primary school[70]. The development of this approach to the teaching of religion has especial significance in the context of secularization, because of its relationship to the concept of desacralization[71]. At its most simple and practical level, the thematic approach means a breaking down of barriers between the different areas of the curriculum, but at a higher level, it also raises all the sorts of questions about the relationship between the spheres of the sacred and the secular which were discussed in ch.3. This integrated approach, (now including such

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67 There are numerous topics which can be treated in this way, but some of the most common are journeys, homes and families, buildings, writing, etc., as well as historical 'patches'.

68 cf. Grimmitt, M., op.cit., p.55. This criticism has been applied particularly to some of the material in the Readiness for Religion series (op.cit). It would also seem to apply to the Scottish Joint Committee, Primary School Handbook, 1975, where very much the same method is followed.

69 cf. Holm, J., 'Religious Education in Primary schools', in Smart, N., and Horder, D., (eds), New Movements in Religious Education, p.166.

70 This broader approach includes what Grimmitt calls depth themes, which,

> 'take as their subject matter or topic the child's immediate situation and experiences and seek to provide him with an opportunity to examine them more closely and discern new dimensions within them.' (op.cit., p.54).

71 Shiner's fifth category of secularization, cf. ch.3.

aspects as 'depth themes'[72] or 'human experience themes'[73]) involves understanding that,

> 'a religious interpretation of life does not mean bringing together and seeing the relationship between religion and life as though they were two separate spheres. It means being able to recognise and interpret religious values and concepts even when they are not met in specifically 'religious' contexts or expressed in religious language.'[74]

On question which arises here is whether religious experience is to be understood as different in every sense from 'normal' experience[75]. This may be vital to the validity of the desacralization theory, but it is particularly pertinent to the educational situation. The difference may lie not in the experience itself, but in its interpretation.

> 'Religious truth is normal experience understood at full depth; what makes truth religious is not that it relates to some abnormal field of thought and feeling, but that it goes to the roots of the experience which it interprets.'[76]

On the whole, thematic teaching takes the latter view[77], and in doing so allies itself closely to the desacralization theory of secularization.

The 'neo-confessional' aim is to be found in many forms, and it has had a large number of exponents. As has been stated above, despite its apparent 'openness', the ultimate aim was, in many cases, to lead the children to Christianity. Nevertheless, the emphasis on variety and freedom of choice which characterises this approach was important in laying the foundations for later developments. This intermediate

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72 Grimmitt (op.cit).
73 Holm, J., Teaching Religion in School, O.U.P., 1975.
74 Holm, J., 'Life - themes: what are they?', Learning for Living, IX (2), 1969, p.16.
75 The question of the specificity of children's religious experience has been discussed by Hull, J., 'The theology of themes', Scottish Journal of Theology, XXV (1), 1972, pp.24-6.
76 Jeffreys, M.V.C., Glaucon, Pitman, 1950, p.118.
77 cf. Schools Council Working Paper 44, Religious Education in Primary Schools, Evans/Methuen Educational, 1972, p.62.

stage is also important in that it saw a growing movement of concern to express the aims of R.E. in educationally acceptable terms[78]. This combines an emphasis on the factual aspects of the subject with an emphasis on the modes of thinking which the subject may produce.

> 'R.E. should try to produce a religiously educated man who is not merely well-informed about religion, able to practise its skills, and to think, should he wish, theologically, but who is committed to the possible importance and significance of religion for the great questions it raises about life and human destiny.'[79]

It is this posing of ultimate questions, and helping pupils to examine a variety of answers to such issues[80], which would seem to be the continuing element of the 'personal quest' approach. The search for meaning and understanding continues into the phenomenological approach.

The Phenomenological Approach to Religious Education

This approach is characterised by the type of thinking associated with Smart[81], and especially with Schools Council Working Paper 36. It engages in the study of religion per se, frequently employing Smart's six-dimensional analysis[82] to examine the phenomena of religion. Thus, religion as a universal human activity and determinant of life-styles becomes the object of study.

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78 cf. Cox, E., Learning for Living, X (4), 1971, pp.3-5.

79 Attfield, D.G., 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a defence of R.E. in county schools', British Journal of Educational Studies, XVIII (3), 1969, p.52. This aim would appear to be highly idealistic in the vast majority of educational situations!

80 cf. Schools Council, Humanities for the Young School Leaver: An Approach through Religious Education, Evans/Methuen Educational, 1969, p.11.

81 Smart, N., Secular education and the logic of Religion, Faber, 1968.

82 The Religious Experience of Mankind, pp.15-25.

A number of statements of aim represent a stage which may be described as 'pre-phenomenological'. These do not show an awareness of the full implications of the phenomenological approach[83], yet they go further than earlier works in preparing for it. Thus Cox's statement of aim in 1970 may be seen in this context. He saw the purpose of R.E. as being,

> 'to help pupils to understand the nature of our present pluralistic society, to help them think rationally about the state and place of religion in it, to enable them to choose objectively and on sound criteria between the many conflicting religious statements that are made in a pluralistic society, and to work out for themselves, and to be able cogently to defend, their own religious position or their rejection of the possibility of having one.'[84]

The only A.S. which really fits into this 'pre-phenomenological' classification is that of Hampshire, 1970[85]. This has been placed here because of its stress on the understanding of the nature of religion[86], though by its strong emphasis on Christianity[87], it may also be considered as 'personal quest'[88].

The phenomenological approach proper is of considerable importance for the interpretation of the changes in R.E. as part of the process of

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83 A good example of this intermediate stage is Matthews, H.F., 'Religious Education - the way ahead?', Expository Times, LXXXIII, 1972, pp.132-6.

84 Cox, E., 'Aims in R.E.', Paper presented to the London Society of Jews and Christians, May, 1970, cited in Schools Council Working Paper, 36, p.38. This is very similar to the view of aims expressed by the report of the Social Morality Council, Moral and Religious Education in County Schools, 1970, which states,

> 'The aim of Religious Education in the county school is to enable a boy or girl to have a proper understanding of what is meant by a religious approach to life . .' (p.13).

85 Hampshire Education Committee, Approaches to R.E.: A Handbook of Suggestions, 1970.

86 ibid., sect. A, units 1-2 (i).

87 e.g. sect. 2 (iv). The tone of the document as a whole is reminiscent of the personal quest approach.

88 cf. also, British Council of Churches, The Recruitment, Employment and Training of Teachers of Religious Education, London, 1971, p.3.

secularization. On this understanding of the subject, the concern is with religion and the growth of the child's understanding of this area of human experience. The whole stance of the subject is radically different from that taken in earlier approaches.

> 'Religion becomes the subject matter of study by the pupil and is no longer the motivating force behind the activity of the teacher. It could provide such motivation, but that would be a largely incidental circumstance.'[89]

This aim has been expressed succintly by Gates as,

> 'To enable a person to become religiate.'[90]

The syllabi which most clearly represent this stance are those of Bath[91] and Birmingham[92]. The latter A.S., over which there has been considerable controversy[93], is a very slight document, and does not contain full statements of aim. However, the purpose is seen as,

> 'developing a critical understanding of the religious and moral dimensions of human experience'

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89 Alves, C., 'Why Religious Education?', in Smart, N., and Horder, D., op.cit., p.28. This description was not of the phenomenological approach, but it reflects the same change in attitude.

90 Gates, B., 'Religious Education, a proper humanism', London Educational Review, II (3), 1973, p.61.

91 City of Bath, A.S. of R.E., revised 1970. This document is regarded by Hull, (Smart and Horder, op.cit. pp.104-7), as having been a forerunner of the controversial Birmingham syllabus in a number of its approaches. He quotes its statement of aim as being,
'to help young people to understand the nature of religion. This does not simply mean teaching about religion if by that is implied an historical survey of the doctrines, practices and institutions of the major religions or even of only the Christian religion. It means helping young people to discuss religious claims with sensitivity to be aware of the nature of religious language and to recognise the criteria and standards by which truth and falsehood in religious beliefs are distinguished.' (p.105)

92 City of Birmingham District Council Education Committee, A.S. of R.I. 1975.

93 For a summary of the arguments, see Hull, op.cit., pp.108-112.

and not as,

> 'attempting to foster the claims of particular religious standpoints. The syllabus should thus be used to enlarge and deepen the pupils' understanding of religion by studying world religions, and by exploring those elements in human experience which raise questions about life's ultimate meaning and value . . . . It should stimulate within the pupils, and assist them in the search for, a personal sense of meaning in life, whilst enabling them to understand the beliefs and commitments of others.'[94]

The phenomenological approach differs from earlier concepts of R.E. in the demands perceived to be made upon the teacher. With many of the earlier approaches, in which Christianity was often the sole content, the real demands made on the teacher were often not fully appreciated, and there was a consequent lack of professionalism. The phenomenological approach, however, makes demands which are very apparent, thus raising fundamental questions about the subject. When acceptance of Christianity was the objective of teaching R.E. it was assumed without question that this was a desirable goal. But why should children be taught about religion, especially in the rather general sense here envisaged, particularly at a time when religion may be said to be a private activity? Most would accept the value of helping children to face the 'questions about life's ultimate meaning and value', but may disagree with this being done within the context of the study of religion. However, a minimum answer to this may lie in the assertion that,

> 'before religion can be said to have no meaning, it must be clear why it has meaning for others'[95]

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94 Birmingham, 1975, p.4.

95 Marratt, H., 'Religious Education', in Whitfield, R.C., Disciplines of the Curriculum, McGraw Hill, 1971, p.46.

The 'others' concerned here include, of course, members of all religions. The key to the understanding of the growth of the phenomenological approach lies both in the background of the comparative study of religions, and, more significantly, in the growth of multi-racial and multi-faith communities in many parts of Britain[96]. The phenomenological approach, although for the sake of clarity drawing many of its examples from Christianity[97], also has reference to a wide variety of religious traditions. This in itself, must represent a 'loss of dominance' for Christianity, and thus must be regarded as part of the decline hypothesis. In this context, it is important to remember that the phenomenological approach is not merely informative, for there is also the 'implicit'[98] or 'existential'[99] side, which involves the search for religious truth and understanding through the children's own experiences and learning situations[100].

The phenomenological approach represents a significant development from the earlier aims, and as such, is an important reflection of, and response to secularization. Firstly, it represents an ultimate detachment from the Church. It is difficult to conceive of this kind of R.E. being if any sense directly in the hands of the Church, any more than of the local Islamic community. It is now generally true that,

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96 cf. Hull, J., 'Religious Education in a pluralist society', in Taylor, M., op.cit., pp.195-205.

97 It is natural that however wide the spectrum of R.E., Christianity will have an important place. Understanding is most likely to be gained against the background of a familiar religion, and also the examples of commitment children will see around them are likely to be mainly Christian. cf. Frost, J., 'Learning about Christianity', in Smart and Horder, op.cit. pp.219-33.

98 The term used by Schools Council Working Paper 36.

99 The term used by Grimmitt.

100 These link with the 'depth themes' and 'human experience themes' discussed earlier.

> 'the religions have ceased to be the sponsors of religious education and have become instead the objects of religious study.'[101]

Differentiation is complete. This does not preclude good relationships with the local Churches or other religious bodies, but they will in most cases be seen as examples of religion rather than as its embodiment. The same is likely to be true of the local clergy. Secondly, religious commitment becomes, in one sense at least, irrelevant. Thus religion itself becomes reified. However, in another sense, there is a strong form of commitment. Whereas with the 'personal quest' approach, 'open-endedness' was the keyword, and there was a point at which R.E. looked as though it might become social or moral education, the phenomenological approach demands that religion itself be taken seriously. It sees religion as an important aspect of human existence, and aims to help the children to recognise this and to be able to cope with its pluriformity. Thus it may represent a challenge to the decline hypothesis, in helping to raise the level of awareness of the importance and real significance of religious belief and practices in human life[102]. Thirdly, there is an aspect of 'conformity to this world' which, although the culmination of a long development in R.E., is most clearly seen in the phenomenological approach. This is the way in which the form and content of R.E. is dictated not by dogmatic or theological considerations (although these are obviously still important), but primarily by the general principles of curriculum development. In the past, there has often been a lack of such thinking in R.E.[103], but in a society under-

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101 Hull, J., School Worship: an Obituary, S.C.M., 1975, p.80.

102 This will only be done if the materials selected for study are well chosen with the aims clearly in mind. If too many exotic but peripheral examples are chosen, then there is a danger of falsifying the position of religion in society by the choice of non-representative examples.

103 cf. Naylor, D., 'Curriculum Development', in Smart and Horder, op.cit., esp. pp.120-5.

going secularization, it would seem that the subject must be open to, and able to withstand, the scrutiny of educational philosophy and curriculum planning. On educational grounds it must be agreed that,

> 'one cannot (logically) be educated in an activity unless it is accepted widely as an intrinsically valuable end or an effective means to such, or both. If the day has come or ever does come, when religious belief is widely enough regarded as neither such an end nor such a means then Religious Education will not be logically possible.'[104]

When the aims and objectives of a programme of R.E. can be seen to be justifiable in the wider educational sense, then the subject is more likely to be able to withstand the criticisms of its opponents. In this sense of conformity, it may also be said that the changes in R.E. reflect the changes which have already been observed[105] in the concepts of religious institutions. This is particularly true of the move away from a rather authoritarianorthodoxy to a more questioning and open position, which is to be seen in both the Churches and in R.E. This openness does not imply taking religion lightly, in the school any more than in the Church, and several statements of aim talk of the significance of 'taking religion seriously'. Thus, the report of the Free Church Federal Council states,

> 'The aim of Religious Education should be defined as the communication of knowledge, the interpretation given to that knowledge, and an understanding of what it means for any living religion studied to be taken seriously. Such a study will include the recognition that all religions depend for their continuance and vitality upon personal commitment and worship.'[106]

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104 Hudson, W.D., 'Is Religious Education possible?', in Langford, G., and O'Connor, D.J., (eds) New Essays in the Philosophy of Education, R.K.P., 1973, p.187.

105 ch.4.

106 Free Church Federal Council, Religious Education in County Schools, London, 1976, p.10.

The phenomenological approach also reflects the theological problem of how to speak meaningfully of God in a secular age, in that there is no longer dogmatic teaching of religious doctrine, but an attempt to start from the various areas of human experience, and the forms, rather than the beliefs of religion. The 'implicit' element is especially important here. This seeks religious truth within everyday experience[107], and is essentially a 'child-centred' approach. Thus, the 'implicit' or 'existential' approach might, for example, aim to help children to a sense of wonder or awe, which would be an end in itself, without being linked to a particular religious standpoint or doctrine[108]. So the implicit approach is also an example of de-divinization, in that within this the religious and the non-religious areas can no longer be strictly categorised. There is here, therefore, the same concept of the search for the holy in the mundane which Davies so often emphasises[109].

The Cultural Heritage Approach

This aim is by no means chronologically last, but it runs through all the different periods in which the aims outlined above have held dominance. Never is it seen as predominant, yet frequently it has been regarded as being of considerable importance. This aim has been expressed as,

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107 The distinction between this and certain aspects of the 'personal quest' approach is summarised in the statement that,
'we are concerned with the pupil's understanding of religion rather than his religious understanding' (Holm, J., Teaching Religion in School, p.20).

108 'It is far more likely that a child will come to grasp the meaning and significance of awe . . through his involvement in so-called 'secular' experiences (e.g. his first sight of the sea, a kitten . . hearing a piece of music . .) than if he is presented with the story of Moses and the burning bush or told about the transfiguration . .' (Grimmitt, op.cit., p.54).

109 Every Day God.

> 'to secure that children attending the schools of the county, if not withdrawn from Religious Instruction, may gain knowledge of the common Christian faith held by their fathers for nearly 2,000 years.'[110]

Another aspect of this aim is found in the Lincoln/Lindsey A.S. of 1951, where it is claimed that,

> 'to be without a working knowledge of Christian faith and practice is to be without the key to the understanding of our environment.'[111]

This aim has been related to the more general aim of education as a whole, which was stated by the Bournemouth A.S. to be,

> 'to transmit to the children the rich heritage of the race, its culture, its technique, all its acquired and systematised experience in every field . .'[112]

The syllabus saw the teaching of 'Scripture' as having an important part to play in the achievement of that aim. A similar aim has recently been expressed in a more limited form in a document from Gloucestershire[113]. The place and form of this aim has changed considerably with the increased emphasis on the study of religions. In some ways, this gives the aim a new importance. It has been argued that close relationship between religion and national or cultural identity is written into British history[114], and this view was strongly expressed in the Parliamentary debate on R.E. in schools on 19th March, 1976[115]. Furthermore,

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110 Berkshire Education Committee, Syllabus of R.I., 1950, p.9. This echoes Surrey, 1923 and 1947.

111 County of Lincoln and parts of Lindsey Education Committee, A.S. of R.I., 1951, p.5.

112 Quoted in Loukes, op.cit., p.30.

113 Gloucestershire County Council, Religious Education in Gloucestershire, 1975 (unpublished).

114 cf. Earl, W.J.H., 'The place of Christianity in Religious Education', Learning for Living, XIII (4), 1974, p.133.

115 St. John Stevas, N., Hansard, (Commons), weekly, 1030, esp. col. 1820.

> 'we talk about our secular society, but there is a sense in which Britain is still Christian: certainly it is at least post-Christian which is not the same thing as plain pagan.'[116]

The 'cultural heritage' aim has always been in one sense retrospective, inasmuch as it refers to a past period in which this culture arose. To some degree, it may suffer from the same problems as several of the theories of the 'decline' hypothesis, in that there is a dependence upon a 'myth' of some golden age of religious practice or piety, against which the present age is unfavourably contrasted. It is interesting that, apart from the modified form of an assertion of the place of the teaching of Christianity in a pluralist, multi-faith society, there has been little real revival of this aim, as might have been expected as a reaction against the secularization of R.E.

The Content of R.E.

It is not a function of this thesis to enter into a detailed discussion of the content of R.E. In terms of developments within the subject, the changes in aims are of considerably greater significance, and because of the subjective nature of the actual presentation of curricular material in the classroom, it would be misleading to place too much emphasis on the content of R.E. as it may appear in any given syllabus. The main concern of this chapter is with the changes in aims, and their relationship to the process of secularization. The implications of some of these changes have been discussed above, but some brief comments must also be made on content.

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116 Earl, W.J.H., op.cit., p.133.

Just as there have been major changes in the aims of teaching religion in schools, so there have also been significant changes in the content of that teaching. The A.S. is not the only guide to content[117], but is a useful indicator of the various elements within the R.E. curriculum. Tables 1 and 2 provide a summary of the movements in content. The classification here is necessarily somewhat arbitrary, but the tables represent an attempt to indicate the general emphases of religious teaching at primary and secondary levels. Many syllabi, even of the older and more traditional type, suggest a wide range of material for sixth forms, including the study of world religions and consideration of philosophical and theological questions, but sixth form work has been omitted, as this involves only a minority of pupils. It is the more general emphases of R.E., for those below the statutory leaving age, that are under consideration here.

The scope of this tabular presentation is inevitably limited, not only by the fact that it considers only the main emphases of the syllabi, but also because in recent years the A.S. has declined in importance and is felt by many to be of little value[118]. This means that in some cases there has been less attempt to update the syllabi, and such revisions as are made are often not in the form of a formal syllabus, but of a working-paper or discussion document[119]. However, the tables do demonstrate the basic shift of content over a period of years. At both primary and secondary stages there has been a marked movement away from the dominance of uncritical Biblical teaching, and a general diversification in the teaching of religion. It is also

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117 There are many indications of content to be gained from the R.E. textbooks of any given period, but these are usually limited to the work of one year in the school.

118 cf. R.E. Council, What Future for the Agreed Syllabus?, 1976, which questions the place of the A.S. but recognises that in the present position of a lack of fully trained and qualified teachers, such guidelines are probably necessary.

119 e.g., Devon County Council, Religious Education in Primary Schools, Exeter, n.d.

TABLES 1 AND 2

Classification of content in Primary and Secondary Syllabi

Key to abbreviations

Ay		Ayre, G.B., Suggestions for a Syllabus in Religious Teaching, Longmans Green, 1911
Be		Berkshire Education Committee, Syllabus of R.I., 1950.
BF		County Borough of Barrow in Furness Education Committee, A.S. of R.E., 1946.
Bm	(1)	City of Birmingham, A.S. of R.I., 1950.
Bm	(2)	" " " " " " , 1962.
Bm	(3)	" " " , Living Together, 1975.
Br		City and County of Bristol Education Committee, Syllabus of Christian Education, 1960.
Ca		Cambridgeshire Education Committee, Cambridgeshire Syllabus of Religious Teaching in Schools, C.U.P., 1939.
CCW		Carlisle, Cumberland and Westmoreland Education Committees, A.S. of R.I., 1951.
Ch		Cheshire County Council, A.S. of R.I., U.L.P., 1949.
Co	(1)	Cornwall County Council, A.S. of R.E., D.L.T., 1964.
Co	(2)	Cornwall County Education Committee, Handbook for R.E., 1971.
Da		County Borough of Darlington Education Committee, A.S. of R.E., 1965.
Du		Durham County A.S. of R.I., U.L.P., 1946.
Dy		Derbyshire Education Committee, Syllabus of Religious Teaching, 1948.
E.R.		East Riding of Yorkshire County Council, A.S. of R.I., 1950.
Gl		Gloucestershire County Council, A.S. of R.I., 1962.
Gr		Grimmitt, M., What Can I do in R.E., Mayhew-McCrimmon, 1973.
Ha	(1)	Hampshire Education Committee, The Syllabus of R.E., 1954
Ha	(2)	" " " , Approaches to R.E., 1970.
He		Hertfordshire Education Committee, A.S. of R.I., 1954.
Ho		Holm, J., Teaching Religion in School, O.U.P., 1975.
La	(1)	Lancashire Education Committee, A.S. of R.I., 1948.
La	(2)	" " " , Religion and Life, 1968.
Le		Education Committee of the City and County of Leicester, A.S. of R.I., 1951.
Li		Lincolnshire Education Committee, A.S. of R.I., 1964.
Lo	(1)	London County Council, The London Syllabus of R.E., 1947.
Lo	(2)	I.L.E.A., Learning for Life, 1968.
Lo	(3)	" , R.E. in the Primary School.

Ly — Lindsey County Council Education Committee, Syllabus of R.I., 1951.

MF — Cole, W.O., Religion in the Multi-Faith School, Bradford, 1973.

Mx — Middlesex County Council, A.S. of R.I., 1948.

No — Northamptonshire Education Committee, Fullness of Life, 1968.

NT — Newcastle-on-Tyne Education Committee, A.S. of R.E., 1965.

Nw — City of Norwich Education Committee, A.S. of R.I., 1951.

Ol — Oldham County Borough Council, The Oldham Syllabus of R.I., 1963.

Pt — City of Portsmouth Education Authority, Syllabus of R.I., 1952.

SCWP — Schools Council Working Paper 36, R.E. in Secondary Schools, 1971.

Sh — City of Sheffield Education Committee, A.S. of R.I., 1945.

ST — City of Stoke-on-Trent Education Committee, A.S. of R.I., 1951.

Sy (1) Surrey County Council Education Committee, Syllabus of R.I., 1947.
Sy (2) " " " " " , Syllabus of R.E., 1963.

Wa — Revised Syllabus of R.I. for the Schools of Wales, Univ. of Wales Press, 1963.

Wi — Wiltshire Education Committee, An A.S. of R.E., 1967.

Wk — City of Wakefield Education Committee, Syllabus of R.I., 1935.

WR (1) West Riding of Yorkshire, Syllabus of R.I., 1947.
WR (2) " " " " , Suggestions for R.E., 1966.

Ww — Warwickshire County Council, A.S. of R.I., 1960.

Yk — City of York, A.S. of R.I., 1948.

Ke — Kent Council of R.E., A Handbook of Thematic Material, 1968.

Su — County Borough of Sunderland Education Committee, Syllabus of R.I. U.L.P., 1944.

TABLE 1: Classification of content in Primary syllabi

Date	Biblical stories only	Biblical with some critical approach	Church history &/ or doctrine	Philosophical/ theological questions	World Religions	Thematic	Social/ moral	Phenomenological
1910-19	Ay,							
1920-9								
1930-9	Wk, Ca,							
1940-9	Su, Sh, Du, BF, Lo(1), Sy(1), La(1), Yk, Mx, Dy, Ch, WR(1),	WR(1)	Lo(1), WR(1),					
1950-9	Bm(1), ER, Be, Ly, Le, Nw, CCW, ST, Pt, He, Ha(1),						Le,	
1960-9	Ww, Br, Gl, Wa, Sy(2), Ol, Co(1), Li, Da, NT, Wi,	Da, No,	Ww, Li, Da,			WR(2), No, Ke, La(2),		
1970-		Ha(2)		Ha(2)	MF, Bm(3)	Ha(2), Co(2), Lo(3),	Ha(2)	Ha(2), Gr, Bm(3) Ho.

TABLE 2: Classification of content in Secondary syllabi

Date	Biblical stories only	Biblical with some critical approach	Church history &/ or doctrine	Philosophical/ theological questions	World Religions	Thematic	Social/ moral	Phenomenological
1910-19	Ay,							
1920-9								
1930-9	Wk,	Ca,	Ca,	Ca,				
1940-9	BF,	Du, Su, Sh, Lo(1), Sy(1), La(1), Mx, Yk, Dy, Ch, WR(1),	Su, Lo(1), La(1), Mx, Ch, WR(1),	Lo(1)			WR(1)	
1950-9	Nw, CCW,	Bm(1), ER, Be, Ly, Le, Nw, ST, Pt, He, Ha(1),	Be, Ly, Le, Nw, ST, Pt,	ST,			He,	
1960-9	Br, Bm(2), Ol, Sy(2),	Ww, Gl(1), Wa, Co(1), Li, Da, NT, WR(2), Wi, La(2), Lo(2),	Ww, Br, Gl(1), Li, Da, NT, WR(2), Wi,	Da,		Wi,	Wa, NT, Da, WR(2), Wi, La(2),	
1970-		Bm(3),	Bm(3),	Bm(3),	MF, Bm(3)	Co(2),	Bm(3),	SCWP, Gr, Bm(3), Ho,

clear that, despite the appearance of a number of new syllabi, there are many areas where the A.S. of the 1950's or early 1960's still forms the official curriculum in R.E.

It is difficult to draw major conclusions for secularization from these data. However, certain points emerge which, when considered together with the discussion of changes in aims, appear worthy of comment. Firstly, it is probably true to say that a secularized society would not be likely to confine its religious teaching, especially that given outside the religious institutions, to any one religious tradition, and it would be even less likely that such teaching should be restricted to the Scriptures of that religion. As secularization may be seen as the 'loss of dominance' by religion, so it would also seem to imply the loss of dominance by any one religious tradition, and thus the shift away from solely Biblical teaching may be seen as part of this process. The changes in content which are outlined here show R.E. to be moving, albeit slowly, in the direction of being 'secular and plural', the form which has been suggested by Gates[120] as the future nature of the subject.

> 'This . .will be <u>secular</u> R.E. rather than nurture into any particular parent faith, Secular, not in any sense antipathetic to religion . . Secular R.E. is a necessary element in understanding man and his situation in the world.'[121]

The movement away from purely Christian teaching would appear to be part of the change that Gates is describing.

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120 Gates, B., 'The Politics of Religious Education', in Taylor, M., op.cit., pp. 215-27.

121 ibid., p.225.

Secondly, the approach to and content of R.E., which allows it to operate fully and freely within the thematic method or a scheme of integrated studies, also reflects something of the secularization of the subject. On this basis, religion is not set apart, but is treated on a par with other subjects, which contribute to the understanding of religion as it does to the understanding of other areas of the curriclum. This would probably be impossible to achieve on the basis of earlier concepts or content of R.E.

Thirdly, there would appear to be significance in the movement which can now be seen away from the Biblical emphasis towards the phenomenological. If secularization means that religious institutions lose their status in society (i.e. the decline theory,) but also that religion is reified, thus in the case of education becoming the object of study rather than a goal to be achieved, then the process would appear to be reflected in the shift from Biblical and Christian dominated work to the phenomenological approach.

CHAPTER 12

GENERAL DISCUSSION

In the preceding chapters a number of trends and changes in the place of religion in education have been outlined, and an attempt made to relate these to the processes of secularization. Some of the issues arising from this will here be discussed more generally.

Firstly, it was seen in chapter 10 that there was originally a very strong concept of R.E. as something essentially different from teaching in other areas of the curriculum. This was reinforced by the lack of grant aid for the subject in 1870, and by the timetable clauses restricting its teaching to the beginning or end of the school day. Although such provisions were later removed, a view of the 'differentness' of the subject is reflected in many A.S.

> '. . the R.I. period ought to be judged by different if not less exacting standards than those which we apply to other school periods . .'[1]
> 'R.I. is different in character from other school subjects'[2]

The idea of this difference persisted, and it is only with such factors as the rise of educational criteria demanding that R.E. be taught and justified on the same grounds as any other subject, and the growth of integrated studies, that this difference has been largely eroded. Thus, the Hampshire syllabus of 1970 says,

> 'there is every reason to approach R.E. in the same way as any other area of the curriculum.'[3]

Apart from the fact that some teachers still believe in an essential

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1 City of Birmingham, A.S. of R.I., 1962, p.7.
2 Carlisle, Cumberland and Westmoreland, A.S. of R.I., 1951, p.4.
3 Hampshire Education Committee, Approaches to R.E., 1970, unit 2 (i).

difference between the teaching of R.E. and other subjects, it remains distinct in two ways; the legal compulsion for the subject to be taught, and its ability to create public controversy.

The difference has undoubtedly declined, however. This may be due in large part to the element of 'conformity'. Religion has been brought fully within the school system, and has had to accommodate to the demands of educationalists. It may also be suggested that the growth of professionalism in teaching of the subject, with the reduction of clerical involvement in this way may be a part of the general process of laicization within secularization[4].

A second significant area would appear to be the decline of the confessional aim in the teaching of religion. This aim was frequently justified on the grounds of Christian nurture, based on the idea of Britain as a Christian country[5]. It is obviously possible to link the decline of the confessional aim in R.E. to the decline theory of secularization on the simple argument that if fewer people are practising Christians then there is less likely to be a desire that children should be brought to a position of commitment to Christianity. However, as has already been demonstrated[6], the decline theory is by no means straightforward or able to be accepted at face value. In the light of earlier comments on levels of practice in the late 19th century and early 20th century, it would seem that it is possible to suggest that some of the syllabi expressing confessional aims earlier in this century may not have been entirely based on the idea of nurture, but were, perhaps, themselves a reaction to the secularization which was

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4 cf. ch.1.
5 cf. Berkshire, A.S. of R.I., 1950, p.9.
6 ch.2.

already occurring. Changing views of the Church may also be related to the decline of the confessional aim. As there is no longer a monolithic view of the Church and theological attitudes to institutional religion are changing so it is less possible for R.E. to be seen as a means of initiation into organised religion.

Although the confessional approach is on the whole no longer accepted, and is difficult to justify on educational grounds, the question of whether R.E. should be basically Christian remains. There may be a lingering element of the confessional approach here. But whatever view is taken in this argument, it is likely that 'Christian studies' will continue to play a large part in R.E. in Britain. But even within this area, significant changes have occurred. The once universally - assumed Biblical dominance of the R.E. curriculum[7] has now been challenged, and although Biblical studies are still important, the process of objectification now means that studies of Christianity as a contemporary religion are of at least equal importance. Thus, for example, the suggestions for studies in Christianity in the Birmingham Handbook (1975)[8] include the study of denominations and their geographical distribution[9], Church buildings[10], the Christian ministry[11], and various forms of Christian action[12]. The process of

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7 Stanford's confident statement that,
'It is difficult to conceive of a programme of R.I. which did not give the Bible a place of prominence' (Education in Focus, R.E.P., 1965) has now been contradicted by events.

8 Living Together, a teachers' handbook of suggestions for R.E., 1975.

9 ibid., pp.c 26-7.

10 ibid., pp.c 39-42.

11 ibid., pp.c 44-5.

12 ibid., pp.c 48-52.

'conformity to the world' is reflected in the study of such questions as Christian interests in politics, and the inclusion of such topics for study at secondary school level[13] is a reflection of the more positive evaluations of such questions by theology[14].

Whereas earlier syllabi were concerned to communicate the certainties of the faith, largely through the presentation of Biblical material, the contemporary situation in R.E. reflects the more tentative position in theology generally. Children are encouraged to be asking the right sort of questions, rather than finding particular answers. This may be seen as a result of the process of secularization, in that if there is no longer general acceptance of certain tenets of faith, but an increasing realisation of some of the difficulties of belief in traditional dogmas, then it may be the task of R.E. to undertake 'education for uncertainty'[15] as a positive reaction to the present situation.

The changes in approach to 'studies in Christianity' may therefore be said to reflect some of the changes in thinking about Christianity generally. Some of the issues involved here link closely with the rise of the phenomenological approach to R.E. Whilst a variety of reasons can be given for the development of this approach, including educational criteria, and the increasing importance in education of non-Christian

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13 cf. e.g., Birnie, I., Christianity and Politics, Edward Arnold, 1970. The preface to this secondary school R.E. textbook states that it,

> 'attempts to provide essential background material for those studying the nature of the Church towards an understanding of its role in the world . . .We believe the world to be the theatre of God's activity, the theatre within which both the individual Christian and the Church have to consider the meaning of mission . .'(ibid., p.3).

14 cf. discussion of 'the world' in ch.4.

15 Cox, H., 'Secularization and the secular mentality: a new challenge to Christian education', Religious Education, LXI (2), 1966, p.87.

religions due to the presence of immigrant communities, this may also be seen as a reaction to secularization, not just in terms of 'conformity' and differentiation as described above[16], but more fundamentally in terms of the theological problems, and in particular of the 'crisis in credibility'. If teachers (and pupils) are finding many of the traditional religious concepts increasingly difficult to accept (and many of the radical 'alternatives' would be too complex for classroom study), but the subject is still legally required to be taught, then a movement towards the objective study of religion is a natural development. However, this argument must remain secondary to the general educational considerations. It is very doubtful whether, even if changes in religion had not occurred, a confessional aim could ever be deemed acceptable on educational grounds today. It is significant in this connection that many committed Moslem parents have assumed that school R.E. will be descriptive and not inductive, and have not withdrawn their children as they wished them to learn about Christianity[17].

All these factors would appear to be present in the phenomenological approach, but its greatest significance for secularization seems to remain in the way it reflects and embodies differentiation. With the phenomenological approach R.E. completes its movement away from the Churches, and enters into the curriculum on a fully educational basis.

The 'political' role of R.E. was discussed in chapter 10, as the way in which provisions for R.E. were used as a means of bringing into

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16 Ch.11.

17 Goulding, J.G., 'New aspects of Religious Education', Trends in Education, XXX, 1973, p.28.

being a national system of education. The way in which R.E. took a major part in the proposed 'moral reconstruction' of 1944 was also demonstrated. Moral education has now emerged in its own right, distinct from R.E. yet with a still somewhat ambiguous relationship to the rest of the curriculum. As was argued earlier[18], the rise of Moral Education has accompanied the decline of the 'social/moral' aim in R.E. Shiner's fourth category of secularization, transposition, has been seen to include the loss of moral controls by religion[19]. If this can be substantiated, then the rise of Moral Education must be seen as a reaction to secularization, either in terms of the loss of social control by the Church, or, more probably, in terms of institutional decline.

Finally, the characteristics of the secular society may be considered in relation to R.E. It was stated in ch.1 that such a society was

'not committed to any particular view of ultimate truth'[20],

was essentially tolerant, based its decisions on rational procedures, and contained within itself diversity and pluralism of religious and non-religious beliefs and attitudes. These characteristics would seem to be fully reflected in contemporary R.E. It is not officially based upon any particular view of ultimate truth, although many of those

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18 ch.11.
19 cf. ch.2.
20 Davis, C., God's Grace in History, p.31.

involved with it may be committed to a particular view[21]. It is thus tolerant of a wide range of ideas. It may be seen as rational, in that it has to conform to the justifications and methodology imposed by educationalists, and its plurality and diversity are evident from the wide range of religious beliefs and practices discussed in many syllabi and text books.

It would appear, therefore, that R.E. has not been left behind by the processes of secularization, and that many of the current aspects of the subject may be seen either as a reaction to secularization, or as further evidence that the process is occurring.

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21 Even among those teachers who would describe themselves as 'committed Christians' there will be a wide range of attitudes and views of ultimate truth.

S E C T I O N IV

SCOTLAND

CHAPTER 13

THE GENERAL SITUATION IN SCOTLAND

Introduction

The preceding sections have considered some of the theoretical aspects of secularization, and the application of these ideas to the particular spheres of worship and of Religious Education. It has been argued[1] that secularization should be viewed as a syndrome rather than as a single or simple process, and it is in this general sense that the concept will be applied in this section, although there will necessarily be consideration of particular aspects of secularization, such as the decline theory. It is the aim of this section to move from general approaches to secularization to a particular geographical and social situation, Scotland, and to attempt to assess the validity of some of the secularization theories in this more specific context, and thus to ask whether Scotland fits into the generally assumed pattern of the secularization of Western society. It will be argued that Scotland does not appear to have progressed far along the continuum towards a secular society. However, the choice of Scotland as the focus for such a discussion would still seem valid for a) it is the local situation, and b) it is part of the British and Western society for which, as a whole, secularization is frequently claimed. Conclusions must be tentative, for, as will be demonstrated below, there has been little socio-religious work concentrating on Scotland. The studies of local situations which will appear in chapter 14 represent examples for discussion rather than the results of any full sociological survey.

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1 Ch.5.

The Historical Background of Religion in Scotland

It will be argued below that the Church, particularly the Established Church, holds a peculiar position in Scottish society, and that this unique status may partially account for the lesser degree of secularization to be found in Scotland than that which may be observed in England. It is not the present intention to attempt to trace the whole history of the relationship between Church and nation in Scotland, but rather to mention a few key factors which may appear to have had some influence on the present situation.

The role of the Church in Scottish society may be said to have been largely determined by the circumstances of the Reformation. Although most of the countries of 16th century Europe were to find the course of the Reformation (and subsequent religious history) closely bound up with political events, in Scotland the whole question of national existence was to become a major part of the religious controversy. One of the reasons for the success of the Reformation in Scotland has been suggested to lie in the constitutional weakness of the country and its monarchy in the mid-16th century[2]. Thus, provided the Protestants were able to gain the support of the Lords, they were quickly able to spread their ideals. The events of 1559 are particularly significant in that despite the doubtful legality of the proceedings Knox's document known as the 'Scots Confession' was read and accepted in Parliament[3]. The Reformers seized this opportunity to defend them-

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2 cf. Chadwick, O., The Reformation, (The Pelican History of the Church, Vol.III), Penguin, 1964, p.171.

3 Whatever the motives of those concerned, it is noteworthy that they did not oppose this discussion on the grounds of its lack of legality, even though they must have known the terms of the Treaty of Edinburgh. (cf. Burleigh, J., A Church History of Scotland, O.U.P., 1960, pp.149-50).

selves against the charges of heresy which were arising from various quarters. From the standpoint of the present discussion this is an example of a trend which became increasingly marked during and after the Reformation. It is significant in that it represents a convergence of national and religious interests, and this convergence of interests may still be observed in several aspects of religion in Scotland[4].

From early on in the Reformation movement in Scotland, the question of Discipline was seen as being one of great importance[5]. Originally, this stress on discipline was aimed at furthering the Christian life of the Church, but it would appear that it later came to be thought of in a rather negative way. The Church was to exercise discipline over all vices with which the civil magistrate did not normally deal[6]. The discipline was to be exercised by the local congregation, acting through the eldership[7]. This disciplinary role of the Church, and its apparent acceptance by the people (there is no evidence of major protest against what may justifiably have been regarded as interference in their private lives), is perhaps a further partial explanation of the close involvement of the Church in the life of the nation[8], and of the situation in which, especially in the

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4 See below.

5 In Knox's 'Confession of Faith' the third 'note of a True Kirk' was seen as being ecclesiastical discipline. The original reason for this emphasis on discipline was not only an attempt to copy some of the theocratic principles of the city of Geneva, but also an earnest desire to purge some of the vices of the pre-Reformation Church. (cf. Burleigh, J.H.S., op.cit., pp.165-6, and Knox, J., 'The sevint heid, of ecclesiastical discipline', in The Works of John Knox (ed. Laing, D.), Edinburgh, 1845, pp.227-33).

6 i.e.,
'Drunkynnes, excesse, . . fornicatioun, oppressioun of the pore by exactionis . . wantoun wordis and licentious leving tending to sklander. .' (Knox, J., op.cit., p.227).

7 The concept of elected elders can be seen in practice as early as 1558 (Burleigh, op.cit., p.143).

8 This is perhaps, epitomised in the activities and interests of the Church and Nation committee of the Church of Scotland, and further comment will be made on these later in this chapter.

close-knit rural communities to be found in many parts of Scotland, the minister came to hold a position of great authority, this authority not being restricted to theological matters. One effect of this would seem to be the smaller degree of lay initiative in Church matters in Scotland as compared with other parts of Britain[9]. The authoritative role of the minister remains strong in Scotland[10]. This is paradoxical, considering that Presbyterianism should, by its very nature, involve greater lay-participation than is possible in many non-presbyterian Churches. Yet it may be that the eldership itself provides a block to lay-initiative, because the system is so formally structured, and still, essentially, clergy-dependent. As has been argued above[11], a strong element of lay initiative and participation may be regarded as a key feature of the life of a worshipping community in a secularized society.

A third significant historical factor must lie in the establishment and position of the General Assembly of the Scottish Church. The General Assembly of the Reformed Church had first met in 1560[12], but for an understanding of the status of that body in contemporary society, the events of the early 18th century are of greater importance. Presbyterianism had been established by law in 1690[13], and the Act of Union of 1707 accepted an Act of the Scottish Parliament for securing the

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9 Evidence of this apparent lack of lay initiative, and further comments will be found in ch.14.

10 The image of the authoritarian minister portrayed by Gibbs and Morton (God's Frozen People, Fontane, 1964, p.53) would still seem to be true in a number of parts of Scotland.

11 cf. especially ch.8.

12 Burleigh, op.cit., p.178.

13 The intervening years has seen the stormy 'episcopal period', during which Stuart kings had attempted to deprive the Scottish Reformed Church of many of its liberties. The Act of 1690 was part of the Revolution settlement following 1689. This settlement brought to an end the long struggle between Church and Crown which had been continuing since the time of Knox. (Burleigh, op.cit., pp.254-5).

Protestant religion and Presbyterian Church government. This Act was to be regarded as part of the Treaty, and a corresponding Act for securing the Church of England was to be passed by the English Parliament[14]. Whilst, following the Act of Union, there was no English Parliament, nor Scottish Parliament, but a Parliament of Great Britain, the feeling nevertheless arose that Scotland was more deprived than England by the constitutional changes embodied in the Act. Thus, by the Act of Union, the Church, and in particular, the General Assembly, gained a new and significant role,

> 'Those who thought that the Church would survive the extinction of the nation did not realise that the consequence would be that in a very real sense the Church would become the nation . . . The General Assembly has to perform some of the functions of a Scots Parliament'.[15]

Thus, on this view, one of the roles of the Church since 1707 has been to provide a focus of loyalty,

> 'Something Scottish that Scotsmen could be loyal to.'[16]

There would appear to be fairly strong support for this view of the Church as the one national institution granted full survival rights, and the centre for much nationalistic feeling. Sissons' study[17] showed that 43% of those questioned in Falkirk felt that any issue which affected the Scottish people was a proper subject for the debate of the Church[18].

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14 Burleigh, op.cit., p.273.
15 Henderson, I., Scotland; Kirk and People, Lutterworth, 1969, pp.112-3.
16 ibid., p.113.
17 Sissons, P.L., The Social Significance of Church Membership in the Burgh of Falkirk, Church of Scotland, 1973.
18 ibid., p.175.

'We have no other way of expressing our opinions'[19]

was one answer given. Sissons drew the conclusion that a substantial minority of those questioned saw the General Assembly as an expression of the national ethos[20]. The same impression of the role of the Assembly, although not supported by empirical evidence, may frequently be found. Thus,

> '. .it remains true that the Church of Scotland is a major focus of the national consciousness and main custodian of the national heritage. This becomes manifest almost to the point of being oppressive at the time of the General Assembly in May when, as they never weary of reminding each other, this gathering of Churchmen becomes the nearest thing to a national Parliamennt that Scotland possesses. .'[21]

Any opposition to this view of the role of the General Assembly in Scottish society would seem to rest not on any argument that no such role is held, but merely on the fact that it is easy to exaggerate the place of the Assembly, and thus to tend to accord too much importance to it. Thus, if the Assembly were quite as important as Jenkins' statement would seem to suggest, then it might have been expected that rather more than 43% of Sissons' sample would have seen it as the proper forum for the debate of Scottish matters. Furthermore, it has been argued that the position of the Assembly may have some parallel in the English situation, for,

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19 ibid.

20 ibid.

21 Jenkins, Daniel, The British; their Identity and their religion, S.C.M., 1975, p.30. A similar statement is found in Sampson, A., The New Anatomy of Britain, Hodder and Stoughton, 1971,

> '. .The Assembly comes near to taking the place of a Scottish Parliament, and is often regarded as the 'voice of Scotland'; the splendour which surrounds Assembly week, some Scotsmen suggest, is a substitute for the gap left by the departure of a Scots king and a Scots Parliament.' (pp.193-4).

> 'whilst the Synod of the Church of England cannot claim to be an English parliament . . it is still consulted by the government on a remarkable number of moral issues . . The Church of England, unlike any other denomination in Britain, including the Church of Scotland, retains a statutory representation within the House of Lords . . it remains socially significant within political decision-making in a way that is disproportionate to its church membership.'[22]

Such an argument, however, may only diminish the uniqueness, but does not challenge the existence of the special role of the established Church in Scotland.

Since the Church holds this position in Scottish society, it is perhaps, not surprising that, on some measures at least, Scotland would not appear to have undergone as full a process of secularization as might otherwise have been expected[23]. For, on this argument, Church membership in Scotland means more than belonging to a particular worshipping community - it becomes the expression of national loyalty, and the sharing in a national ethos. A useful test of the validity of this claim may be provided in the creation of a legislative assembly for Scotland, although any effects on the Church are likely to be long-term and indirect. Conversely, it may be argued that contemporary pressures for the creation of such a body, and the current rise of nationalism may, in part, stem from the institutional decline of the Church, and the subsequent loss of a sense of national identity for many people[24].

Whilst the above-mentioned circumstances of the convergence of

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22 Gill, R., 'Has secularization reached Scotland too?', Worldview, XVII, 1974, p.40.

23 A fuller discussion of the contemporary situation in Scotland will appear later in this chapter.

24 Such a suggestion is, of course, impossible to substantiate or quantify. Although some questions on political allegiance and preferred forms of national government were asked in Sissons' study the survey was rather too early, and the questions not structured in such a way that any correlation between institutional decline and the rise of pressures for devolution could be drawn.

national and religious interests in the Reformation, the early emphasis on discipline and the Act of Union cannot be said totally to explain the peculiar position of Scotland with regard to secularization, they would appear to have had some influence in forming some of the attitudes to the Church which still prevail in Scotland today. They may have contributed to the situation in which religion is still an important part of the framework of reference of world-outlook for a large proportion of the population, and within which, despite the presence of such elements of secularization as institutional decline[25], the evidences of the process would appear to be less marked than elsewhere. Such factors may thus be at least partly responsible for the somewhat intangible difference between the religious situations in England and Scotland,

> 'It is . . . largely a matter of atmosphere; and that Scotland's cultural atmosphere is still that of a religious - specifically of a largely Presbyterian - society, no-one who knows the country can seriously doubt. True, these things are difficult to pin down in words, . . . though one can convey something (even if but negatively) by mentioning the contrast between the 'feel' of Scotland and the 'feel' of England.'[26]

Before attempting to consider the contemporary situation of Scotland and the extent to which it may, or may not be said to be undergoing secularization, it is first necessary to comment on the sociology of religion in Scotland, since this is likely to provide the data for any such considerations.

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25 see below.

26 Highet, J. 'Scotland', in Mol, H., Western Religion, the Hague, 1972, p.267.

The Sociology of Religion in Scotland

There is very little material in this field. The present intention is to review briefly some of the few studies that have been made, so as to form a background for later discussion and to show the limitations of the presently-available sociological picture of religion in Scotland.

> 'Scotland has an unimpressive record of production in the field of the sociology of religion. There is a sad irony about this, for she has a world-wide reputation, not entirely unfounded, as a Church-minded nation. (Yet that, maybe, points to a sufficient reason for her tardiness in developing interest in this field . . .)'[27]

These words of Highet, the major writer on the sociology of religion in Scotland[28], would seem to provide an important hint about the Scottish religious situation. The idea of Scotland's very 'religiosity' being a major factor in the lack of sociological study of religion would seem to represent absence of the process of disengagement or differentiation in religion, (i.e. secularization in Shiner's third sense), and also, perhaps, to some extent, a lack of the element of 'conformity to this world, (secularization in Shiner's second sense), which enables religion to become sufficiently objectified to be a proper subject of social study[29]. Highet has been alone in producing a major body of

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27 Highet, J., 'Review of socio-religious literature in Scotland', Social Compass, XI (3-4), 1964, p.21.

28 In addition to those works already cited, Highet's publications include The Churches in Scotland Today, Jackson, 1950; 'Scottish religious adherence', British Journal of Sociology, IV (2), 1953, pp.142-59; 'The Protestant Churches in Scotland', Archives de Sociologie des Religions, VIII (2), 1959, pp.97-104; The Scottish Churches, Skeffingtons, 1960; and 'Churchgoing in Scotland', New Society, LXV, 26th Dec. 1963.

29 This question will be considered more fully below, in the context of the consideration of Religious Education in Scotland, an area in which there would appear to have been a similar reluctance to 'objectify' religion.

material providing comparisons between the religious situation in Scotland and that of England and Wales, and reference to some of his findings will be made below.

It was as late as 1966 that the next empirically-based work on the sociology of religion in Scotland was produced. This was Robertson's study of religious attitudes in Edinburgh[30]. The most significant finding of this investigation was the strikingly similar patterns of attitudes towards the Church in both the middle- and working-class samples[31]. More recently, there has been an increase in the amount of work in this field, the most important work clearly being Sissons' study of the social significance of Church membership in Falkirk[32]. This report represents a full documentation of the socio-logical background of the local situation, and a close analysis of the attitudes and levels of Church membership and participation of the respondents. The particular focus of this study was on the communal/ associational typology as applied to concepts of Church membership, and several of Sissons' conclusions will be discussed later in this section. In the light of Highet's comment, cited above, on the lack of socio-religious studies in an apparently religious country, it is significant to note that the Falkirk study was essentially 'church-based', in that the survey was sponsored jointly by the Hope Trust[33] and the

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30 Robertson, D.R., Church and Class in Scotland, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1966; 'The Relationship of Church and Class in Scotland', A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain, I (ed. Martin, D.A.), S.C.M., 1968, pp.11-31. Two groups, taken from a fairly small geographical area, were used to analyse different attitudes towards the established Church, taking into account a variety of sociological indices.

31 Robertson, D.R., op.cit., p.27.

32 Sissons, P.L., op.cit.

33 A trust primarily concerned with the principles of Reformed Churchmanship in Scotland.

Church and Ministry department of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

A survey conducted in August, 1976, by System Three opinion polls and published in October, 1976, by the Glasgow Herald[34], was the first study of its kind to be carried out in Scotland. This asked basic questions on belief and practice, and analysed responses by age and denominational differences. Whilst this was hailed as a 'major study'[35], it appears to have done little more than present standard statistics, with no attempt to refer to basic sociological principles[36]. The lack of real reaction to this survey, with its conclusion that Scotland is,

'a nation of God-believers but not God-fearers'[37],

(a conclusion that was scarcely substantiated by the evidence) would seem to support the view that the sociological approach to religion is still not generally accepted in Scotland.

Three other works may be mentioned briefly. The first, although not strictly sociological, has strong sociological assumptions and implications, being a study of the threat and challenge of oil developments on the North-East of Scotland. Scotland in Turmoil[38] provides a

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34 Glasgow Herald, Oct. 11th, 12th, and 13th, 1976.
35 Glasgow Herald, Oct. 11th, 1976, p.1.
36 Furthermore, the teenage survey, published at the same time as the System Three study, and looking at first sight as though it were part of the same work, was in fact a teacher's enquiry, covering only 65 school pupils.
37 Glasgow Herald, Oct. 11th, 1976, p.1.
38 Francis, J., and Swan, N., Scotland in Turmoil, Church of Scotland, 1973.

further example of the growing concern of the Church to analyse its work in sociological terms[39]. The second work is Panton's study of church membership patterns in Alloa[40], from which the tentative suggestion was drawn that,

> 'there may be factors operating which render the linear relationship between Church membership and social class inapplicable when the focus is on social areas rather than on social groups or individuals . . .'[41]

Finally, mention may be made of the brief study of patterns of recruitment to the ministry in Scotland made by Maxwell-Arnot[42]. Although this is a work of very limited scope, the trend described, towards a less well-educated clergy, may, in the long term, be of some significance for the process of secularization. Such a trend may lead to a change in the public status and expectation of the ministry, and, moreover, necessitate an increase in the lay participation which has already been shown to be a mark of the secularized situation[43].

It is difficult to draw any general conclusions from the very limited amount of work that has been done on the sociology of religion in Scotland. There is little pattern running through the various available studies. Highet's work was mainly Church based, and only

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39 This is most noticeable in the recent and on-going work of the Committee of Forty, of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. See e.g. The Church of Scotland, Reports to the General Assembly, 1975, pp.509-56.

40 Panton, K.J., 'The Church in the community: a study of patterns of religious adherence in a Scottish burgh', Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain, VI, S.C.M., 1973, pp.183-206.

41 ibid., p.205.

42 Maxwell-Arnot, M., 'Social change and the Church of Scotland', Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain, VII, S.C.M., 1974, pp.91-110.

43 cf. esp. ch.8.

that of Panton and Sissons can be said to be society-based[44]. Clearly, such work in Scotland is only just beginning, and the lack of studies directly aimed at a comparison with England or other better-documented situations, means that this work must remain rather isolated. It is, perhaps, within the nature of the Scottish religious situation, which, as will be shown below, tends to be less pluriform than that of other societies, that this sociological situation exists. In similar vein to Highet, Panton commented,

> 'Despite the public image of the Scots as a Puritan, God-fearing nation, the nature of their religious commitment has been subject to little in the way of analysis by social scientists.'[45]

whether this public image is uniformly true for the whole of Scotland is questionable, but that the image exists at all may be one reason for the lack of sociological study. A situation becomes sociologically interesting when there is variety of belief, diversity in levels of practice, and some indication of change. When there is at least an outward image of a certain uniformity and stability, then it may well be that there is less incentive for the sociologists to move in, although perhaps greater need.

The Contemporary Situation in Scotland

In a recent article entitled 'Has secularization reached Scotland too?', Gill wrote,

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44 Even Sissons' work, however, was essentially 'Church-orientated' because of the nature of the sponsorship.

45 Panton, K.J., op.cit., p.183.

> 'The question-title of this article contains two implicit assumptions that I find thoroughly embarrassing. The first is that secularization is some inevitable process gradually reaching out to the far corners of the Western world. The second is that Scotland is, frankly, a backwater; secularization has reached almost everywhere else, and now is about to reach this last bastion of the old order. Very soon the fate of old-style religion will be sealed, and secularization will have achieved its final victory somewhere in the wild mountains of the Scottish Highlands.'[46]

Whilst such assumptions may be challenged on several grounds, they would appear to reflect the truth that Scotland does not seem to have been so exposed to the full force of secularization as have some other parts of Britain.

The syndrome of secularization, as has been shown above[47], is far too complex and subtle to be open to any direct form of measurement. Only the category of institutional decline lends itself to this method of examination, and even this can often be misleading[48]. Thus, this attempt to analyse the contemporary situation in Scotland will be restricted by the limitations of the usefulness of statistical comparison, and the necessity to comment on certain intangible features of Scottish life, such as the 'religious atmosphere' referred to by Highet.

In the article cited above, Gill went on to say,

> 'Embarrassing as these assumptions undoubtedly are, they may well represent the self-estimation of many Scottish Churchmen. Untroubled by the disputes among British and American sociologists of religion over the meaning, scope, and even existence of a process called secularization, many Churchmen in Scotland would appear to believe both that 'religion in general is on the decline'. . . and that Scotland is only gradually succumbing to the decline . . This self-estimation of the Scots may in turn be the picture of religion in Scotland that is dominant in the rest of the world.'[49]

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46 Gill, R., op.cit., p.38.
47 Section 1.
48 cf. the discussion of Shiner's category of institutional decline in ch.2.
49 Gill, R., op.cit., p.38.

This general image of Scotland as a 'religious' country would seem to imply the expectation of a fairly high level of religous practice. For reasons which have been discussed above, it is not possible to produce many statistics for comparison of levels of practice between Scotland and other countries. However, on the basis of the material available, it is possible to examine Shiner's first category, the theory of institutional decline, for the case of Scotland. That there is an accelerating process of decline in the membership of the national Church for the period 1911-75 is demonstrated by figure 1[50]. The decline is significant, though not particularly dramatic, and might seem to belie the impression of,

> 'the enormously impressive institutional stability of the Kirk in the modern world.'[51]

which has been claimed in a recent work by Daniel Jenkins.

However, this total figure alone may tend to give an exaggerated picture of decline. Figure 2 shows the membership of the Church of Scotland expressed as a percentage of the total adult population. Whilst this shows a significant decline, particularly in more recent years, it will be seen that a figure of 35%-39% was maintained over a period when total numbers were declining.

Figure 3 shows admissions and removals expressed as percentages of the total membership of the Church. This must be seen in the light of the fact of the rather different nature of admissions and removals. Whilst admission to the roll of the Church is a positive and formal step, formal removals normally include only those who have died, removed

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50 Statistics obtained from the Church of Scotland, Reports to the General Assembly with the Legislative Acts, Edinburgh, annual publication.

51 Jenkins, Daniel, op.cit., p.28.

to another district or Church, or asked to be removed from the roll. This does not therefore take account of others who have 'ceased to meet'. Figure 3 shows that, while earlier in this century admissions and removals remained more or less in step, the gap between them is now widening, although the latest available figures show a slight narrowing of this gap. The decline in admissions may not entirely reflect a decline in attendance, but may be more indicative of changing attitudes towards formal membership of the Church. It may also be an indication of outside influences (such as the Pentecostal movement), affecting teenagers at the age when they might otherwise have been taking up Church membership.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of the total membership of the Church communicating at least once a year. Because of the infrequency of, and attitudes to, communion in the Church of Scotland, such figures must be treated with some caution, but the maintenance of a steady figure of over 60% (apart from the period of the Second World War) would seem to indicate that the duties of Church membership are still taken seriously by the great majority.

These figures, although limited to the Church of Scotland, would seem to provide a reasonable guide to levels of Church membership in Scotland as a whole. Whilst they undoubtedly indicate a decline in membership, this would not appear to be a dramatic decline, and it would therefore seem that, in the case of Scotland, the institutional decline theory must be treated with some caution.

A further perspective on the situation in Scotland can be gained by making the comparison with the situation in England and Wales.

F I G U R E 1

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, 1911-1975

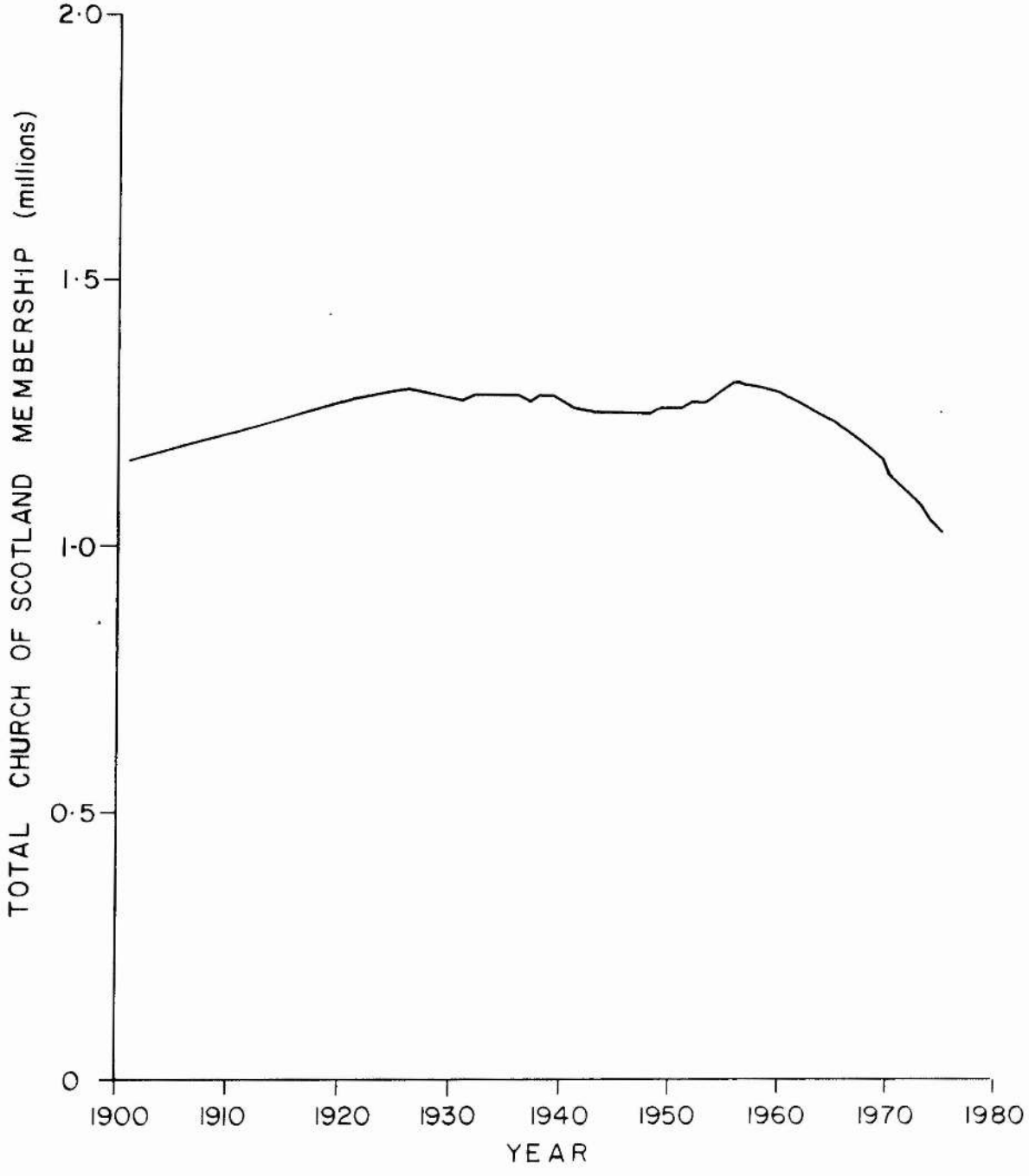
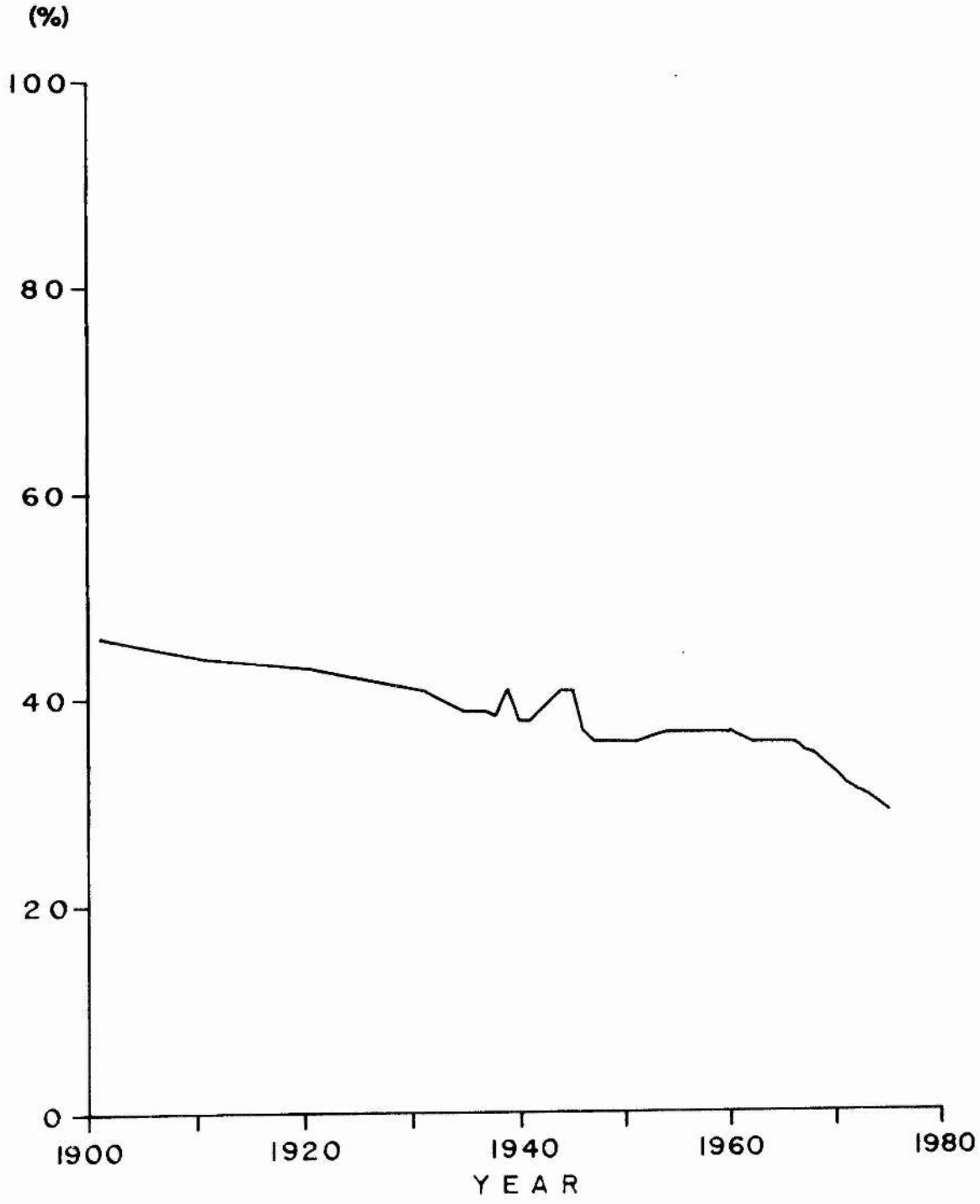

2·0
1·5
1·0
0·5
0
TOTAL CHURCH OF SCOTLAND MEMBERSHIP (millions)
1900
1910
1920
1930
1940
1950
1960
1970
1980
YEAR

FIGURE 2

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL ADULT POPULATION, 1901-1975.


(%)
100
80
60
40
20
0
1900
1920
1940
1960
1980
YEAR

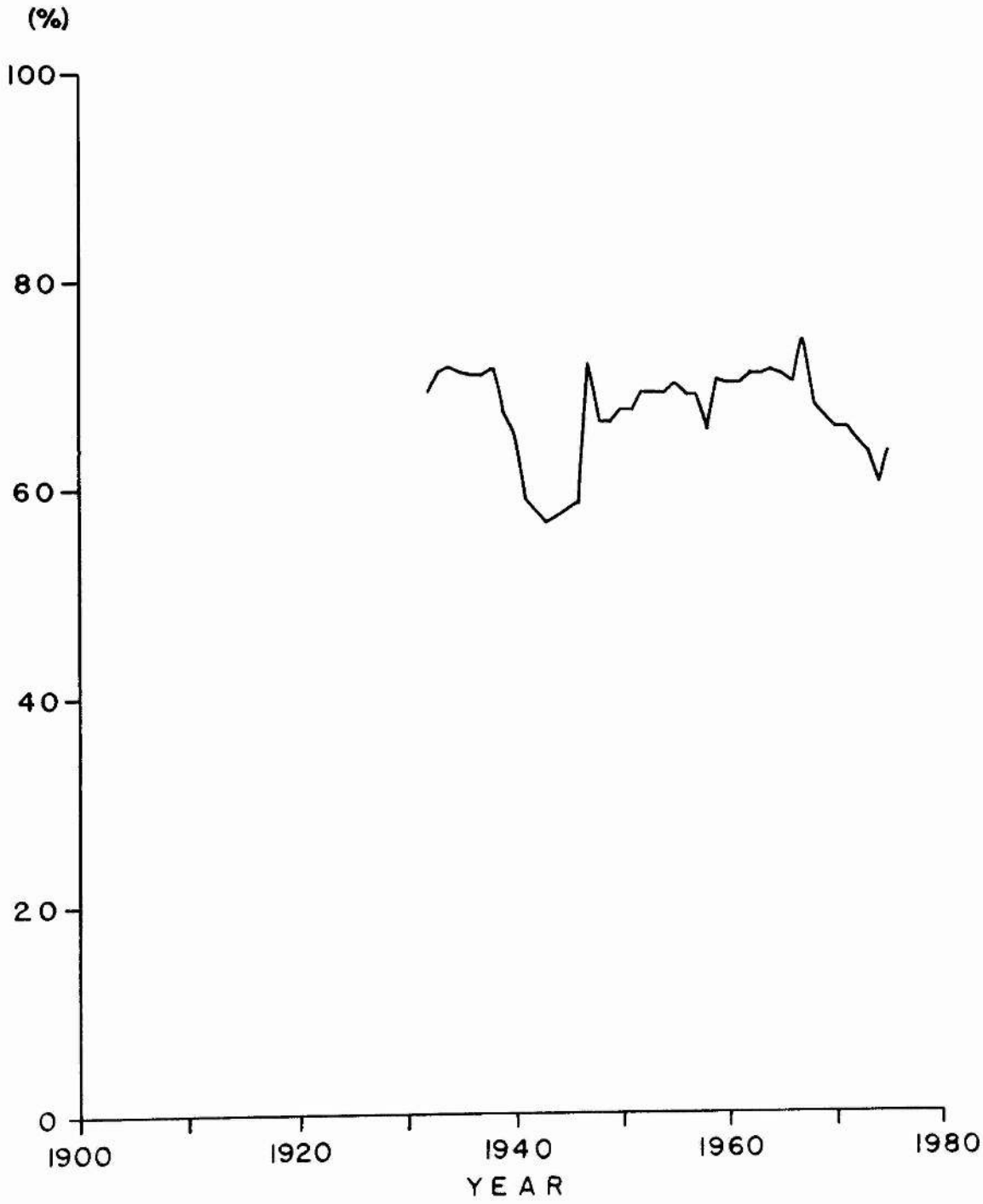
F I G U R E 3

ADMISSIONS AND REMOVALS EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES OF THE TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, 1901-1975.


(%)
Admissions
Removals
10·0
8·0
6·0
4·0
2·0
0
1900
1920
1940
1960
1980
YEAR

F I G U R E 4

PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND COMMUNICATING AT LEAST ONCE PER YEAR, 1932-1975.


(%)
100
80
60
40
20
0
1900
1920
1940
1960
1980
YEAR

> 'The major structural difference between the religious populations of England and Scotland is that of size. The overall percentage of Church members in Scotland is higher than in England, and whilst participation in the Church is relatively low in Scotland, the processes of institutional decline are not as evident as they are elsewhere.'52

Sissons was able to substantiate this claim by showing fairly high levels of attendance from those in the random sample survey claiming Church membership[53]. Furthermore, actual levels of attendance at Church were fairly high in the Falkirk survey, there being 3,000-4,000 attenders (out of a population of 37,500) every Sunday morning[54].

More specifically, it has been estimated by Highet that,

> 'Relative to the adult population, . ., Church membership in Scotland is about two and a half times what it is in England-plus-Wales, while the Church of Scotland, with more than one-third of the country's adult population in membership of it, and a more-than-sixty-per-cent share of total membership, is a national Church to a far greater extent than the Church of England, since the Anglican community in England and Wales can claim only a little more than 40 per cent of total Church membership in these two communities taken together.'55

Whilst the survey on which these conclusions are based was made in 1951[56],

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52 Sissons, P.L., Op.cit., p.73.

53 Regularity of attendance at worship, by per cent

	N =	Every Sunday	2/3 Times a Month	Monthly	Infrequently
Church of Scotland	809	54	35	4	7
Roman Catholic	131	99	0	1	0
Protestant Minorities	175	80	15	3	2

(Sissons, P., op.cit., p.68).

54 ibid., p.102.

55 Highet, J., in Mol, H., op.cit., p.257. It is interesting to compare the position of the Anglican Church in Wales, which, although the largest single denomination, remains definitely a minority. (cf. Martin, D.A., A Sociology of English Religion, p.92)

56 The Churches in Scotland Today represents the basic survey.

Highet sees the changes which have occurred as being downward trends in both situations. Therefore, when asking whether Scotland is a secular society, Highet is able to conclude that the forces working elsewhere towards 'dechurching' have undeniably also been working in Scotland, especially in terms of the 'spin-off' from the English situations. Nevertheless,

> '. . . In the lack of general agreement as to which level of Church membership represents for a society the dividing line between being secular and being 'religious', it is open to one to suggest that with a majority still in full, official membership of her Churches, despite 'dechurching' influence, Scotland is not secularized.'[57]

It may therefore be concluded, in the light of the available evidence, that, on the criterion of institutional decline at least, secularization would appear to be affecting Scotland to a lesser extent than England and Wales. This, however, is only one aspect of secularization, and the one which lends itself most easily to analysis and measurement. It is only possible to consider in much more general terms the applicability of other forms of secularization to the contemporary Scottish situation.

The changes implicit in Shiner's second, third and fourth categories of secularization (conformity to this world, differentiation and transposition), are very difficult to quantify. To an extent, they are inevitably to be found in Scotland, inasmuch as the Scottish Churches, as all other Churches have, for example, been subject to increasing

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57 Highet, J., in Mol, H., op.cit., p.267.

bureaucratization and concern for ogranisational structures[58]. An example of this may be seen in the on-going work of the 'Committee of Forty' of the Church of Scotland, whose remit is,

> '. .to interpret for the Church the purpose towards which God is calling his people in Scotland, to investigate and assess the resources of the Church in persons and property for the fulfilment of this purpose, and to make recommendations for the reshaping of the life and structure of the Church.'[59]

This manpower and resources study is being undertaken on a more widespread and radical level than the 1964 study for the Church of England[60]. In this sense, then, there is an obvious element of 'conformity to this world' in terms of the self-analysis of the Church as discussed in chapter 2. As was also argued above, the 'conformity' category of secularization must be seen to include the increasing concern of the Church for the affairs of the world. There would appear to be a prima facie case for saying that such concern has always been very evident in the Church of Scotland, and,

> '. . the Church and Nation committee of the Church of Scotland . . . has produced a sustained running commentary on the 'state of the nation' which has no parallel in the rest of Christendon.'[61]

However, it was argued in chapter 2 that the novelty of contemporary concern for the world lies not in the 'content' of the issues with which the Church is concerned (although there may be significant changes here) but in the approach which is taken to them, for lacking a position of dominance and a voice of authority, the prophetic and

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58 This is obviously less true of some of the small Highland churches, but the particular position of religion in these areas will be discussed further below.

59 The Church of Scotland, Reports to the General Assembly with the Legislative Acts, 1974, p.519.

60 Paul, L., The Deployment and Payment of the Clergy, Church Information Office, 1964.

61 Jenkins, Daniel, op.cit., p.30. In recent years the interests of the Church and nation committee have covered such varied topics as No

challenging role of the Church is regained, and positive action is urged, as it were, from below. If, as would appear to be the case, the Church of Scotland still holds a position of authority in society, epitomised in the popular view of the General Assembly[62], then, perhaps, the apparent concern with the affairs of the world does not represent the 'conformity' type of secularization, but still reflects, in some ways at least, the view of the Church 'set over against' the world and its affairs.

Shiner's fifth category, that of desacralization, is impossible to quantify, except perhaps by devoting a full study to this subject alone. Therefore, no specific comments will be made on this type of secularization in the Scottish context. Shiner's final, more inclusive category, of the movement from a sacral to a secular society, has already been touched upon in discussion of the comments of Highet and Gill. From the general picture of religion in Scottish society, it would seem that Scotland has not moved so far along the continuum from a sacred to a secular society as have some of her neighbours.

A number of factors would seem to point to this conclusion. One important consideration is that of urbanisation. Whilst it has been argued above[63] that the causal connection between urbanisation and secularization should not be too readily assumed[64], it nevertheless remains the case that there is justification in associating secularization

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61 (cont.)
Sea oil and gas, agriculture, the World Food crisis, the mass media, the needs of the mentally handicapped, the E.E.C., South Africa, penal reform and the issue of Scottish stamps!

62 see above.

63 ch.1.

64 cf. especially the arguments of Macintyre (Secularization and Moral Change pp.31-2) and Chadwick, O., The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth century, Cambridge University Press, 1975, pp.93-103.

with the large, urban situation. Scotland, however, it still largely rural. But even the term 'rural' is, perhaps, most applicable to farming or fishing areas whose social and economic life and outlook is directly influenced by large towns. The term is scarcely adequate to describe the way of life and attitudes of many of the communities in the Highlands and Islands[65]. Many of these communities are still socially and geographically remote from the rest of Scotland, and in many, the influence of religion is still very strong[66], this in some cases being evidenced by such outward signs as strict Sabbath observance. It may be argued that, despite the large geographical area covered, the actual population represented by such communities is small, and that they hold little significance for present purposes. However, even among the urban populations of Scotland, the awareness of the remote, rural parts of the land is strong, and although, in many cases, families have been urbanised for several generations, the emotional hold of rural Scotland, and a certain identity with it, remains. Whilst the greater part of the Scottish population lives in towns or cities, the 'myth' of Scotland is the romanticised view of the Highlands[67] and this is perpetuated by much of the culture and by the popular media. Many Scots songs have specific reference to particular geographical locations, and appear to aim to evoke a certain picture of, and feeling

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65 The term is used here in a general sense to describe these remoter areas of Scotland, and not in the more specific sense used in the economic context.

66 The smaller Presbyterian churches dominate in some of these areas, particularly in the West Highlands and Outer Hebrides. These are the Free Church of Scotland and the Free Presbyterian Church.

67 'Yet still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides.' (Sir Walter Scott)
Such sentiments as these, although often originating with expatriate Scots, would seem to epitomise the basic emotional link with the Highlands still found in many parts of Scotland.

for, these remoter areas of Scotland. Yet it would seem that few are the indigenous songs of the areas described. Whilst Scotland is largely urbanised, it may be that something of the rural outlook on life remains. Thus it may be suggested that it is this awareness of way of life other than that of the urban, technologically-based society, which may have been one factor, among others, in halting the progress of secularization in Scotland.

At this point, a comparison with the Irish situation may be helpful. Of this, Spencer[68], commenting on the pervasive power of the rural ideology in Ireland, leading to a 'rural outlook in an urban milieu'[69], has said,

> 'Irish urban life has a very rural quality. It is pervaded with the sacred; it tends to be low in rationality, myth is dominant over history; there is a very strong sense of community . . .'[70]

Whilst historically and socially Scotland and Ireland reveal major differences, and Scotland is more urbanised than Ireland, there would seem to be a basic similarity in the strength of the rural attitudes. Furthermore, even apart from the remoter Highlands and Islands communities, much of the population of Scotland still lives in small market or fishing towns, thus depending on an agricultural or fishing economy. With this essentially rural element remaining strong in the Scottish culture, the loss of potency of traditional religious symbols and imagery is likely to be less severe than in a more fully urbanised society, and thus also to impede secularization.

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68 Spencer, A.E.C.W., 'Urbanisation and the problem of Ireland', The Month V, 1972, pp.355-62.
69 ibid., p.361.
70 ibid.

A second factor associated with urbanisation is the limited degree of geographical mobility which would seem to be occurring in Scotland. This was noted by Sissons in the case of Falkirk[71], and is likely to be reflected elsewhere in Scotland. Limited mobility is likely to have the effect of inhibiting the flow of new ideas, particularly within the Church, and to mean that loyalities to a traditional community can be sustained over a longer period. Thus the strength of traditional ties is likely to reinforce some of the attitudes discussed above.

Conclusions

Any conclusions on the general nature of the Scottish situation must necessarily be somewhat tentative, but there would appear to be a number of factors in the social and religious constitution of Scotland which contribute towards its special position vis-a-vis secularization.

The historical circumstances leading to the formation of the Church of Scotland, and the way in which the relationship between Church and state is epitomised in the special role of the General Assembly as the 'voice of Scotland', would seem to be a major factor in the creation of the present situation. Furthermore, the idea of the Church providing a focus for nationalloyalty, would seem to reflect a more widespread feeling of the importance of the Church in national life.

Whilst numerical decline may be observed in the national Church, it still remains a major national institution, taking a significant

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71 Sissons, P.L., op.cit., pp.66-8, inter alia.

part in national life. Thus, while the decline theory may be applied to Scotland, this can only be done with caution, and against the wider background of Britain as a whole, so that numerically, as well as psychologically, the importance of the Church in the national life of Scotland can be reaffirmed.

The lack of socio-religious studies on Scotland may be taken to suggest that there is a reluctance to objectify religion in Scotland. (This question will be considered further in chapters 15 and 16.) This may imply that there is an absence of secularization in Shiner's third and fourth senses, but it may more simply reflect the fact that there is insufficient change for sociologists to react to.

Finally, there is the more intangible factor of a strong rural outlook on life persisting in many parts of Scotland. This may be an inhibiting factor for the spread of secularization inasmuch as it represents a failure to accept the full implications of urbanisation, and the retention of a basically rural 'feeling' in society. This may imply that desacralization has not been as strong in Scotland as elsewhere, although this would be difficult to substantiate. This fact would certainly seem to reinforce and underlie many of the other factors which may be seen as contributing to the slow progress of secularization in Scotland.

CHAPTER 14

A CONSIDERATION OF SOME LOCAL SITUATIONS IN SCOTLAND

Introduction

The intention here is to consider a number of local Church situations in Scotland, each of which may, in some sense be regarded as a pointer to some of the ways in which secularization is operative in Scotland. They are not local surveys, but rather represent brief case-studies for discussion.

A questionnaire[1] was prepared and sent to about 45 clergy working in a variety of situations[2]. This was in no way intended as a scientifically-based sociological sample study, but rather as a means of 'taking soundings' of a few situations at the local level, and of getting the views of some of those working in these situations. There were obvious constraints upon this study, and the selection of question-

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1 The questionnaire consisted of five sections. The first aimed at obtaining a brief description of the area and the community served by the Church, with questions on population, class-patterns and occupational groups dominant in, or absent from, the congregation. The relevance of the 'parish boundary' (or its equivalent) to the actual area served by the Church was also examined. The second section dealt with the Church and the community. This sought information on the extent to which there was any single, readily-identifiable community, and the ways in which the Church was, either directly or indirectly, acting as a centre for that community, in terms of the provision of a number of specific community needs. Questions were also asked on the involvement of the Church or its minister in local education and politics. The third section dealt with worship, and after asking for some indication of average attendances (broken down into age groups) questioned the extent of involvement of the laity in the formation of the liturgy, and the use of various 'experimental' forms of worship. Comments were invited on the reactions of congregations to such changes. The next section dealt with theology, and sought some indication of the level of awareness of contemporary theological trends among the respondents' congregations. The final section sought comments on the expectation of the Church held by the local community as a whole, especially in respect of times of crisis, and the ways in which these expectations may have altered in recent years.

2 These were mainly in Scotland, and most of the Scottish respondents were Church of Scotland. A few were also sent to clergy in England and Wales, in order to help to provide a perspective on the Scottish situations.

naire-recipients was necessarily somewhat arbitrary, but was based on either sociological or liturgical criteria (or both). That is, either the area in which they were working was one of relevant social change or it was a Church in which liturgical developments (particularly of the kind referred to in Section II) had been occurring. Thus, there was also an attempt to discover whether there was any link between the social and liturgical changes implicit in secularization. In this way, liturgy was being used as an indicator of the relationship between theological and sociological aspects of secularization in one limited field.

Perhaps the main result of the study, (and one which might have been anticipated), was that the rather limited response to many of the questions tended to throw into a position of isolation those Churches in which significant development on both social and liturgical issues was occurring along the lines envisaged in the questionnaire. Secondly, it is clearly difficult to place much weight on some of the information provided, because of the strong subjective element in the nature of such responses. That is, the respondent's own role-perception will almost inevitably be coloured by what he is aiming to do, or would like to be able to do, as well as by what he is actually doing. Moreover, this subjective element means that such changes and developments as are occurring in a given Church may be very idiosyncratic, and if that minister should leave the situation, then the dependence of these changes on him may be shown by the quick reversion to former or more 'traditional' practices. Thus, in such circumstances, it is difficult to assess to what extent a concept has genuinely been internalised and accepted by a congregation, or to what extent changes are accepted

because of their personal acceptance of the initiator of those changes. One of the points arising from the questionnaire is the congregational attitude towards various experimental forms of worship. It would seem at first sight that there might be little difficulty over these, because the majority of Scottish Churches do not use set liturgical forms. However, as has already been suggested in chapter 8, even so-called 'free' forms of worship can become very 'set', so that changes must often involve radical shifts of attitude.

These problems being noted, it is possible to consider in more detail six of the situations examined. These have been followed-up with more detail than that provided by the original responses[3], and selected as illustrations of some of the changes described in sections I and II.

Falkirk, Grahamston

In the references to Sissons' work, implicit comment has already been made on the contemporary religious situation in Falkirk. He described Grahamston Parish Church as sharing with Erskine Parish Church,

'the reputation of being the most socially active in the town'[4]

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3 The information in the examples which follow has been gathered over a fairly long period in the course of the research. Whilst certain details in these selected examples has been updated, they do not necessarily reflect the situation at the time of presentation, for they should be seen as illustrations of changes related to the syndrome of secularization, rather than as a full, up-to-date picture of the Church in that situation.

4 Sissons, P.L., op.cit., p.44.

Grahamston Church was originally built in order to serve the growing population surrounding the foundries in the Northern area of Falkirk. Its present congregation is drawn mainly from the lower middle-classes, although many of the more socially-mobile families who have moved out of the area still continue their associations with this Church[5].

The area,

> '. . . boasts three foundaries, a concrete works and a gas works; it lies between the long-disused Forth and Clyde canal and the railway which runs through the centre of Falkirk. It is, literally and sociologically, 'the other side of the tracks'; known to planners as a 'twilight zone', its population having been halved in the past forty years - and the demolition is at least keeping pace with the depopulation.'[6]

It was against this background, typical of many industrial areas in central Scotland, that the 'Grahamston Ecumenical Experiment' began. The four Grahamston Churches in close proximity[7] decided in 1971 to come together as one congregation, using two sets of premises instead of four. The decision was taken democratically[8], and whilst there was inevitably a certain rejection of the strangeness of leaving a familiar place of worship, the changes have, on the whole been accepted well[9].

In this situation, of not only social change, but also of physical change for the Churches, it may be said that it was the changes themselves which precipitated the developments in worship. For although liturgical experiment had been found in some of the Churches

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5 Information gained from questionnaire response.
6 Craig, M., 'Grahamston United Church', Coracle, LXII, 1973, p.13.
7 One Methodist, one Congregational and two Church of Scotland (an old United Presbyterian and the Parish Church).
8 Of the 850 members who voted, representing well over half the total membership, 85% were in favour of the change. (Craig, M., op.cit., pp.14-15).
9 This, and other information on Falkirk Grahamston, comes either from the questionnaire response, or from discussion with Rev. Maxwell Craig, former minister of Grahamston.

before the formation of the new united congregation, the very fact of groups of people having to adapt to new premises and strange traditions seems to have facilitated the kind of liturgical developments later to be found in Grahamston. The existence of a 'worship group' meeting monthly to comment on, and help develop forthcoming services is one evidence of this, and provides an example of the aspect of participation discussed in Section II. Thus liturgy can more readily reflect the needs of the congregation (or at least of the articulate section thereof), and various forms of liturgical experiment have been undertaken. It would appear that the majority have been in favour of these, and also that there is some congregational awareness (though largely minister-initiated), of some current theological trends. Although a few of the congregation seem willing to discuss such ideas, they are, on the whole, rejected.

The 'ordinariness' of Grahamston was commented on by Craig[10], and the accuracy of this description may readily be observed in the area. Yet this points to a feature of the situation which may seem paradoxical. Clearly, there are a number of ways in which, despite their limitations, the liturgical situation at Grahamston is beginning to move in some of the directions described in Section II. Yet the very ordinariness of this traditional working-class area of Falkirk would not in any way suggest that this is part of the 'secular society', nor that it is even ready for a number of the social or theological aspects of secularization. Even the force of the institutional decline category is lessened when the major depopulation of the area is taken into account. One partial explanation of this paradox may be the

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10 Craig, M., op.cit., p.13.

extent to which changes are clergy-initiated, although it would seem that there has been a fairly general assent for the changes, and willingness to participate in them[11]. A further partial explanation may be sought in the dramatic structural change which overtook the parish in 1971, thus facilitating changes which, for this congregation, might otherwise have been ahead of their time. Thus, there would appear to be here a close relationship between social and liturgical change.

Edinburgh, Richmond - Craigmillar

The parish is situated in a large council-housing estate to the South-East of Edinburgh, built in the 1930's as slum clearance from an inner-city area. The move uprooted an entire community, together with the Churches and a certain sense of local identity. Early local pride declined with the death or removal of many of the original residents, and the estate quickly acquired a bad reputation. Its rents are low compared with many other estates in the city, and thus there tends to be a very transitory population. The few remaining long-term residents are isolated, often having little in common with their immediate neighbours and being reluctant to leave their homes for fear of vandalism

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11 The existence of the worship-group and the obvious democratic traditions of the Churches would tend to argue against anything being done without the willing consent of the congregation. However, one of the comments in reply to the questionnaire described this congregation as 'ready to be led', so there was obviously an expectation of initiation of ideas 'from above'.

and robbery[12].

The Church in this parish has attempted to respond to the obvious social needs. Yet although it has been instrumental in getting certain improved facilities for the community, there would appear to have been a continuing rejection of institutional religion, and the view has been expressed[13] that it would seem that the Church can now only offer people religion.

Recognising the special circumstances in Craigmillar, the Church of Scotland established a five-year experimental ministry there in 1970[14]. Largely because of the personnel involved in the team, there have been many liturgical developments, with a particular emphasis on music, and there has been strong congregational involvement. Yet in this situation, there is a feeling of being 'forced back into the conventional'[15]. When asked about congregational attitudes to the changes, the questionnaire response states,

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12 This, and other information on Richmond-Craigmillar, comes either from the questionnaire response, or from discussion with Rev. Ian Cowie and Rev. Douglas Galbraith, ministers on the team. Confirmation of this picture of conditions in the area is provided by the 1951 census, which showed that Craigmillar had one of the highest levels of overcrowding, a ratio of 155 persons to 100 rooms being found there. (Keir, D., The City of Edinburgh, Third Statistical Account of Scotland, XV, Collins, 1966, p.378). The same conditions prevailed in 1970. In that year, 51 families on the estate had to be rehoused because of overcrowding. Craigmillar also had the highest number of cases of Sanitary Department orders to tenants to clean dirty stairs and passages, and the highest number of cases of insect infestation of homes in the city. (Edinburgh, Medical Officer of Health for the City, Annual Report of the Health Department for 1970, Edinburgh, 1971, pp. 128 and 134).

13 Questionnaire response.

14 The original staffing of the team was by two ministers and a deaconess, with additional help from students. This has now expanded to at least 5 full members of the team.

15 Questionnaire response.

> 'The few who attend worship come because they like the old way, . . . the others can't be induced to come and see, so the conventional are dropping off in disgust and others don't come to take their place. .'

This situation produces an interesting comparison with Falkirk Grahamston. Whilst it may be argued that far more radical liturgical changes are occurring in Craigmillar, it would appear that Grahamston is more 'successful' if public acceptance of the Church is taken as a criterion of 'success'. Figure 5 shows the present trends of the official statistics for Craigmillar[16]. However, Craigmillar confirms the difficulty of taking too simplistic a view of secularization. It might appear that, because of the apparent 'failure' of the Church there, secularization, and especially 'secularized' forms of worship, should be regarded as essentially middle-class phenomena, alien to people in places like Craigmillar who, as the above response indicates, want either the conventional or nothing to do with religion. Yet it may be doubted, on sociological grounds[17], whether any forms of Church activity would be particularly 'successful' in this area[18].

However, it may also be argued that there is here a very fundamental example of secularization. The real work of the team has, in many cases, found expression outside the conventional framework of Church activities. 'The Brew' (a coffee house established on Church premises),

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16 These are confirmed by the questionnaire response which showed an average Sunday morning attendance of about 50, (one-third of these being over 65 years).

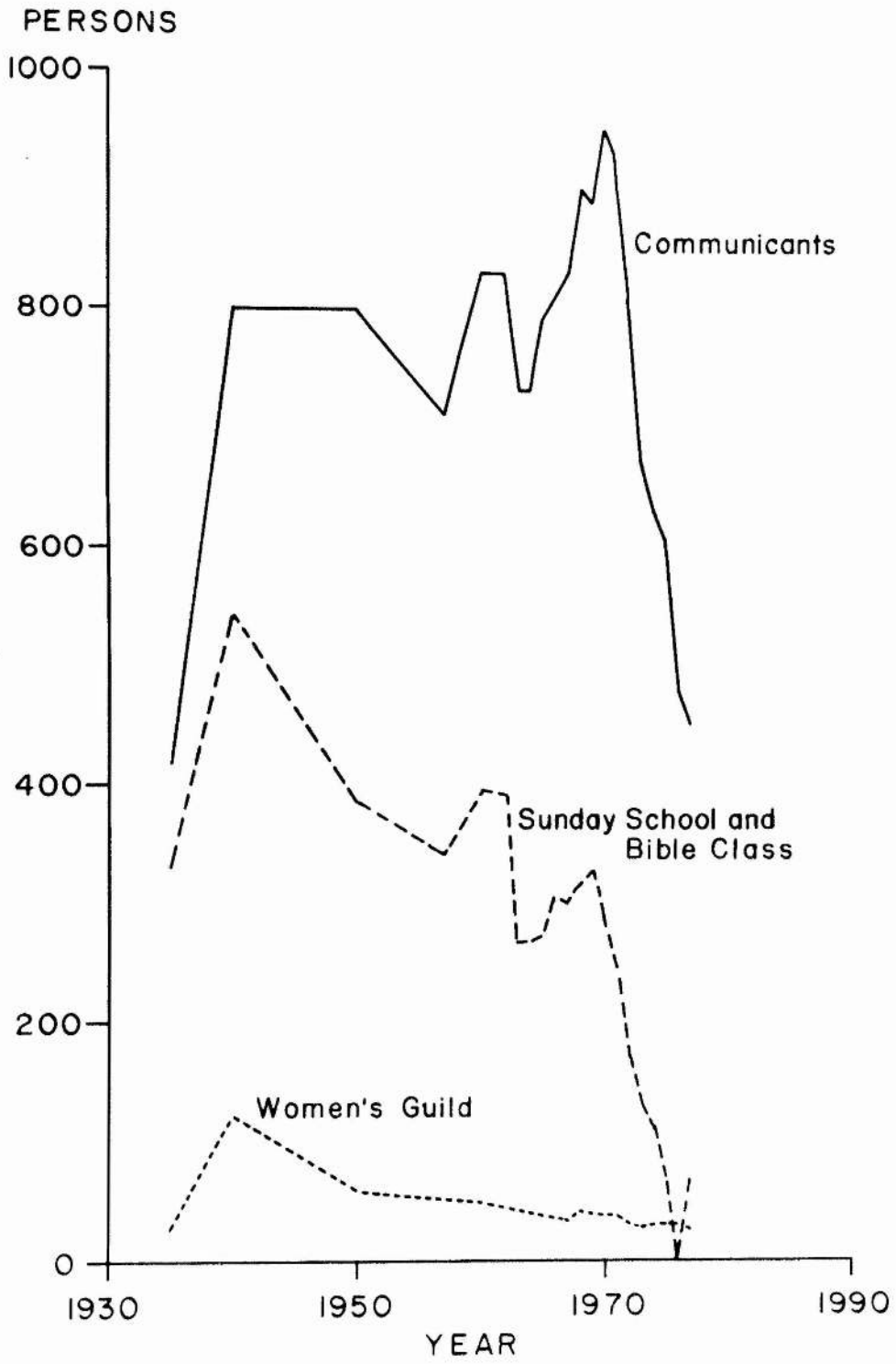
17 i.e., in view of the traditional working-class 'alienation' from religion.

18 The area has, over several years, been the object of a number of 'missions', preaching a fundamentalist Christianity. Whilst these could readily have been identified as 'religion', there is little evidence that they were particularly successful.

F I G U R E 5

OFFICIAL STATISTICS FOR RICHMOND - CRAIGMILLAR CHURCH, 1935-1976

(source: Church of Scotland, Yearbook, 1935-1976)


PERSONS
1000
800
600
400
200
0
Communicants
Sunday School and
Bible Class
Women's Guild
1930
1950
1970
1990
YEAR

> ' . . . serves breakfast from 9.30 a.m. and is open in some cases until midnight. A good cross-section of the local people and professional workers in the district meet and mingle there, and sometimes take decisions affecting the community. Various activities are offered . . it is used at certain times as a hang-out for young people. Just as important is the supportive role it can offer to people with particular problems (a member of staff is always available) . . mutual support groups can also be encouraged . .'[19]

Beyond this 'social work' role, there has been the more significant attempt to build up a sense of community in this depressed area. There is now a new image of Craigmillar, particularly,

> 'as the home of vigourous, colourful and truly indigenous local festival, which would be the envy of many a medieval continental town'[20]

The Church has played a significant role in the Festival Society[21], which sees the Festival as a 'field force for social action'[22]. By the use of Church premises for these and other activities, the idea of the Church as a focal point for the community, even though not for purposes of worship, is being restored.

The two sides of the paradox of Craigmillar may be related in that one of the questionnaire responses reflected a feeling that 'over-secularization' had occurred in this area, with an over-emphasis on social action, so that in the process some people may have lost their sense of identification with the Church. Because it did not resemble the type of Church in which they had been brought up, that is, one

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19 Galbraith, D., 'The Craigmillar team ministry', Coracle, LXV, 1974, p.15.
20 ibid.
21 A permanent body dedicated to improving the social and physical environment of the area.
22 Galbraith, D., op.cit., p.15.

holding 'traditional' services, and restricting its activities to 'religious' matters, it no longer fitted in with their role-expectation of a Church, and hence they rejected it.

Glenrothes, St. Columba's

The new town of Glenrothes in Fife was built in the late 1950's and early 1960's[23]. It now has a mainly lower middle-class population, with a high annual turnover[24]. In the new town situation, middle-class problems of urban life, with the break-up of the extended family and the emphasis on possessions as a means of escape from anonymity[25], affect those who might otherwise not encounter such problems. Further difficulties may arise in the attempt to adapt to the mobile society of a modern, urban community, and the syndrome known as 'new Town Blues' would appear to be common incomers to any new town.

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23 The town was originally designated in 1948, and intended for a community based on the coal-mining industry, particularly for workers in the developing Rothes colliery. However, to avoid the physical and social isolation of the old pit-head villages it was intended that only 1/8 of the population should be miners, and that other industries should be brought in to provide a balance. Due to changed circumstances in the coal industry, the plan for the area was changed, and, since 1959, Glenrothes has been seen as a growth area for diversified industry. (Glenrothes Development Corporation, Glenrothes, 1970, p.4). Besides acting as a replacement for the declining mining areas, Glenrothes also now takes some Glasgow 'overspill'. (Reports of the Cumbernauld, East Kilbride and Glenrothes Development Corporations, H.M.S.O., 1958, p.84.)

24 In 1971, 1,147 tenancies were created and 1,100 were terminated. (Reports of the Cumbernauld, East Kilbride, Glenrothes, Irvine and Livingston Development Corporations, H.M.S.O., 1971, p.108.) One reason for this high turnover may be that a new town frequently acts as a 'stepping-off point' in career structures. Another reason is that in Glenrothes, there is little housing available to buy, the majority being the property of the New Town Corporation. (In 1973, there was a total of 8,545 homes owned by the New Town Corporation, and only 81 privately-built homes; Reports, 1973, p.117). Therefore, those who do settle in the area tend to move out into the surrounding villages to live, so that they can purchase their own homes.

25 This becomes particularly acute in areas where there is great similarity of housing, so that possessions become 'status-symbols' and a means of individuality and identity.

> ' "New town blues" became a byword, and loneliness and depression was invariably linked with new towns, giving a disturbed sense of reality. The difficulties of adjusting to a new environment were very real and great, particularly to women who had the additional hardship of isolation in their new homes in their roles as wife and mother. Inevitably they missed the social contact with relatives and friends which they had enjoyed in the old established communities from which they moved.'[26]

St. Columba's parish Church, dedicated in 1961, was the second Church to be built in the new town by the Church of Scotland[27], and stands at the South West corner of the town centre[28]. The population of the parish is about 10,000, and the concept of 'parish' seems to be clearly defined, consisting of three of the 'villages' which form an important part of the town planning structure[29]. Whilst focal points for the communities are provided by the planners[30], many problems remain, particularly those of loneliness and adjustment.

St. Columba's is distinctive in its architecture[31], the design allowing for what may be described as 'liturgy in the round'. The plan was originally seen as a return to the principles of the Scottish Reformation, whereby,

> 'the sacraments of Word, Baptism and Communion were placed in the midst of the gathered family of God's people.'[32]

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26 Pitt, G., 'A Consumer's View', in H. Evans (ed), New Towns: the British Experience, Town and Country Planning Association, London, 1972, p.140.

27 cf. Levison, L.D., 'St. Columba's Parish Church, Glenrothes', Church Service Society Annual, XXXVIII, 1968, p.14.

28 'Town centre' is a specific term in Glenrothes, describing the retail and commercial area, which is clearly separated from the residential areas by being surrounded by major roads.

29 cf. Levison, L.D., op.cit., pp.14-15.

30 Planning has allowed for centres of community to grow around the shops and schools within the 'villages'.

31 The Church is square in shape, with the altar in the centre, at the base of a T-shaped dais. The congregational seating is on three sides of this.

32 Levison, L.D., op.cit., p.15.

With these facilities, various forms of liturgical development, particularly using music and drama[33], have occurred at St. Columba's. There have also been attempts at other forms of congregational involvement, and there has been evidence of spontaneity in terms of the ability to respond to stimuli and take action upon them. An illustration of the way in which St. Columba's really functions as a parish Church is afforded by the practice of evening prayers every weeknight, the congregation being summoned by the Church bell[34].

If urbanization is held to be a key factor in secularization, then Glenrothes or any new town might appear to be a useful example. Incomers to a new town have been uprooted from traditional communities, and many are faced for the first time with some of the problems of the new urban middle-class. There is often a strong technological overlay to the life style of such a town, since it may be technologically-sophisticated light industry that provides the economic mainstay of the community. Whilst few came to Glenrothes from a totally rural background, there may still be a contrast with the life of small, single-industry towns or mining villages. It would not, however, seem to represent a very radical form of urbanisation. The impact of urbanisation may further be lessened by the fact that many see their stay in the new town as being temporary, and thus there may be a certain sense of unreality about the new urban situation. Thus, in such a case as Glenrothes, it would appear to be unreasonable to seek for evidences of secularization simply on the grounds of the recent urbanisation of the residents.

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33 This, and other information on St. Columba's Clenrothes, comes either from the questionnaire response, or from discussion with Rev. Peter Youngson, former minister of the parish.

34 St. Columba's Parish Church, Glenrothes, Evening Prayers for Church and Home, 1971, p.1.

In terms of the comments made above[35] on worship as the experience of an identifiable and well-defined community, it would seem that a Church in a well-planned new town might be in an ideal situation, inasmuch as the parish is so well-defined, and the community has clear foci not only in the Church, but also in community centres and schools. Yet it may be questioned how far this apparent sense of community is real to the residents, especially in view of the high annual turnover of population commented on above. Many may feel a disinclination towards involvement, because they see the town as only a very temporary home. It is significant from the questionnaire response that although it was felt that the congregation were in favour of the liturgical experiments and their continuance, they were seen to be 'against anything which demands participation'. This may, perhaps, suggest that the comments made in Section II reflect a more articulate and middle-class type of congregation than is actually to be found in many local situations.

Aberdeen, Northfield Parish Church

The parish has a population of about 12,000[36], and is situated on a large, post-war housing estate[37] to the North-West of Aberdeen. For such an estate, it may be regarded as fairly prosperous.

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35 Section II.

36 This, and other information on Northfield, comes either from the questionnaire response, or from discussion with the former minister of the parish, Rev. William Whitson.

37 The housing is mainly council owned, although there is some Scottish Special Housing Association property.

> 'Northfield parish is a recognisable residential area . . but not . . a community in any other sense. It has some shops and some industry . . there is no correspondence between residence in the parish and place of work.'[38]

As many have a stronger sense of belonging to Aberdeen as a whole than they do to Northfield, a considerable number still attend Churches in the City centre or in other parts of the city. This tends to be particularly true of those who have been active members of those Churches.

In recent years, Northfield has been involved with a number of liturgical experiments, which although not necessarily radical in themselves, probably represented a major change for most of the people locally. The ideas behind these developments may be summarised in these comments,

> 'It is . . quite improper for Christians to think of worship as an activity on its own, unconnected with the rest of life. Basically, what happens is that we are a congregation of Christian people, and . . . when we meet, all sorts of things happen. Some of them we may feel inclined to describe as worship, some of them may not seem to have much to do with our conventional idea of worship . . . what matters is whether or not they seem good and natural things to do, and whether they help us to be a Christian community, celebrating the wonder of God's love . .'[39]

It could be said that the most significant aspect of liturgical development at Northfield was not something outwardly observable, and therefore quantifiable in terms of certain specific liturgical changes, but rather a more basic change in approach to, and therefore, understanding of, worship.

The congregational reaction in this situation was assessed in

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38 Questionnaire response

39 Whitson, W., Sunday Morning, A Guide to the Christian Celebration, Dunbeth Parish Church, Coatbridge (unpublished), 1974, p.17.

the questionnaire response to be that they were in favour of the experiments and their continuance, but 'unwilling to do anything about it'. Yet even this reaction was consciously subjective, for 'people do not express opinions'. It is difficult to judge whether, on any criteria, this is a 'successful' Church. It may be that one factor inhibiting comment on or personal involvement in liturgical change is that very traditional views were held of the respective roles of clergy and congregation, with the expectation of the minister as the sole initiator, and little or no place for dialogue. The lack of professional people and businessmen in the congregation (and in the parish as a whole) may have helped to increase this gulf, with the lack of an articulate minority who could have helped to taken an initiative in lay participation. This argument that social factors may inhibit the reception of liturgical developments may be illustrated by brief reference to one of the other Churches studied, Erskine Parish Church, Bishopton, Renfrewshire. This parish is a community of mainly middle-class postwar housing, with a fairly stable population[40]. There is a strong element of lay participation in liturgy, and a wide variety of forms of liturgical development has occurred there. The approach to worship may be summarised in this statement,

> 'Worship is an activity. It is something we DO.
> It is not something we watch or listen to or attend . . .
> Worship is an activity we do <u>together</u>.
> It is a group activity . . . . .
> Worship involves all of us present - and every part of each of us.'[41]

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40 This and other information on Bishopton Church comes from the questionnaire response.

41 Erskine Parish Church, Bishopton, <u>Worship, Guidelines for Services</u>, p.1.

The full and willing participation of the congregation in this situation may in part be due to the fact that many are articulate and used to speaking in front of others, and in part due to the security provided by a strong sense of community, with the subsequent feeling of communal sharing in the new experiences. Such security can accommodate the element of spontaneity, often stressed as an important feature of liturgy in a secularized society[42].

The comparison of Northfield and Bishopton would appear to reinforce some of the conclusions reached earlier, particularly in the case of Glenrothes, that many of the features of worship in a secular society that were discussed above are far more applicable to a middle-class than to a working class congregation.

Glasgow, Gorbals

This example differs from the preceding case-studies in several respects. Firstly, it is more historical, being mainly concerned with the period of the mid and late 1960's. Radical change, in the form of demolition and rebuilding has overtaken Gorbals recently, so that it is difficult to relate the circumstances of the 'new Gorbals' to those of the 'old Gorbals'. Secondly, although a Church, Laurieston-Renwick, and its congregation are involved here, the main focus is on the Gorbals Group and its work.

Gorbals, once a separate Burgh of some distinction[43], has, in

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42 cf. Panikkar, R., 'Secularization and Worship', Studia Liturgica, VII, (2-3), 1970, pp.59-61. See discussion of this in ch.8.

43 Gorbals was once an ancient Burgh of Barony and Regality, with its own separate and very active local authority (cf. Cunnison, J. and Gilfillan, J.B.S., Glasgow, Third Statistical Account of Scotland, Collins, 1958, p.420).

recent decades, suffered a sharp decline in amenities and status[44], to the extent that, by the late 1950's the name 'Gorbals' was widely synonymous with extreme slum conditions and all the associated forms of deprivation.

The Gorbals Group started in December, 1975[45], and was originally a close-knit group[46] living in the older part of Gorbals, sharing not only a religious discipline, but also a common economic fund[47], although this latter element was dropped in later years. The original aim of the Group was,

'to provide in the area a caring Christian presence'[48],

and the workings of this aim took four main forms,

'a) The personal neighbourhood relationship with families and individuals . . .
b) The provision of specific services to various groups . . .
c) The involvement in . . . Community Work - that is, assistance to the community at large in its effort to better its position, particularly in regard to the achievement of rights
d) The sharing of common concerns with other groups throughout the city . . '[49]

The first of these would appear to have been of particular importance, and underlying the others, thus,

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44 At the 1951 census it had a residential density of 530 persons to the acre, and this came after a period of sharp depopulation since the 1930's (Cunnison and Gilfillan, op.cit., pp.55 and 61).
45 Reports to the General Assembly, 1973, p.332.
46 The number and composition of the Group have varied over the years. It has consisted of up to 15 members, including mainly ministers, social workers and teachers.
47 cf. Henderson, I., Scotland, Kirk and People, p.53.
48 Reports to the General Assembly, 1973, p.332.
49 ibid., p.333.

> '. . The main thrust of the Gorbals Group experiment - has been not so much in terms of conscious experiment as in the direction of personal and community relations . . seeking to share with our neighbours in the plus and minus urban living; attempting at the same time to serve in whatever way we can, both in the felt and the unconscious needs of our neighbours and our community.'[50]

Two particular problems to which the Group addressed itself were housing and the needs of young people, and involvement was often by informal rather than formal methods, having a strong supportative element[51].

Athough the Group had an overtly 'social work' function, it was essentially a religious group. Its weekly meetings ended with a Communion service[52], and the members shared a common discipline of prayer and critical examination of all their efforts.

The relationship of the Group as a whole to the life of the local Church was slight. A major difference between the Group and the congregation was that whereas the Group all lived in Gorbals, a large number of the congregation no longer did so, but returned to the area for Sunday services, sometimes travelling considerable distances. There would also have been a number of local social differences[53]. One member of the Group was minister of the local Church, and inevitably, the existence of such a group within the parish, must have had a bearing on the life of the Church, and particularly on the concept of the Church held by the people.

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50 Harvey, W.J., 'The work of the Gorbals group experiment', Coracle, LVIII, 1971, pp7-8.

51 This included involvement in the various brushes with the law which are a common part of the life-experience of many young people in Gorbals (ibid., p.8).

52 The repetition of the words of Is. 61:1-2 at this service emphasised their understanding of the aim of providing a caring Christian presence (Reports to the General Assembly, 1973, pp.332-3).

53 The most striking of these would have been that, in contrast to the majority of the congregation, the Group were almost entirely professional people.

The parish Church of Laurieston-Renwick (now demolished), was one of four Churches in the area, all facing similar problems. The congregation was mainly elderly[54], and many were coming some distance to the Church from the areas in which they had been rehoused. Ideas of religion in the Gorbals tended to be dominated by a strong Catholic-Protestant polarisation, and in some cases Church membership was seen as being secondary to that of the local Orange lodge. The general expectations of the Church held by the 80-100 regular attenders were those of a fairly traditional 'low' Church of Scotland.

In this situation of demolition and physical change, the scope for liturgical development was naturally limited by the fact that neither the Church nor the congregation would be there for many more years, as well as by the age and social background of the members. With these restrictions the major area of development was that of the language and imagery of worship[55]. The social concerns which were so acute in the area, and with which the Group were closely involved also found expression in liturgy.

The reaction of the congregation to these changes was assessed to be that they were in favour, but not willing to take the experimentation any further[56]. Because of the anti-Catholic feeling in the area, there was a strong suspicion of new forms of ritual and symbolism.

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54 This, and other information on Gorbals and Laurieston-Renwick comes either from the questionnaire response or from discussion with the former minister of Laurieston-Renwick, Rev. W.J. Harvey.

55 This was developed particularly in the Sacraments.

56 However, the only feature that they were specifically said to be against was services involving discussion.

An assessment of Gorbals in terms of secularization theories is complicated by the social conditions of the area, and by the rapid rate of change in recent years. Considering first the Gorbals Group, it may be said that this was clearly of the Church, although not self-consciously working within it. On this basis, it may be seen as an example of the increasing 'worldly' concerns of the Church, and furthermore, it may in a sense constitute something approaching the idea of a 'para-Church'[57]. The Group may have provided a more positive and articulate response to secularization than would have been possible with a wider and more disparate group. Whilst faith and the personal practice of religion were clearly of importance to the Group, the formal structures of institutional religion would appear to have been of secondary importance, thus suggesting that this may equate with some of the emerging forms of Church life discussed earlier[58].

Despite the restraints upon liturgical development at Laurieston Renwick, they nevertheless fit into the pattern of worship in a secularized age described in Section II. Whilst the social factors discussed in the case of Aberdeen Northfield and Glenrothes would also have been operative in Gorbals, the impending closure of the Church may have facilitated changes which would not otherwise have been so readily received, since in this situation there was 'nothing to lose'. It can only be a matter of speculation as to whether the presence of the Group was helpful in this respect, but it is possible that this in some cases helped to broaden the concept of the Church

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57 cf. the discussion of this in ch.4.

58 ch.4. The Group was not independent, it was formally sponsored and supported by the Home Board of the Church of Scotland (but its members were not all of that Church), and to that extent was officially a Church of Scotland venture.

held by the congregation, and that they were thus more easily able to accept changes in the traditional patterns of Church life and worship.

Conclusions

It is not possible to draw any general conclusions from the situations discussed above, but only to comment on points arising from these. Firstly, it may be noted that few of the questionnaire responses seemed to indicate a situation on which the secularization syndrome had made a strong impact, or in which the Church appeared to be making an effort to recognise and respond to the secularization of society as a whole. Whether this meant that such secularization was not occurring, or simply that the Church had not yet reacted accordingly, is impossible to assess. While situations other than those selected for discussion above could have been included, the total number of significant examples would still have represented only a small proportion of the responses received.

Secondly, it would seem that the response to, and awareness of, secularization is greater in essentially middle-class areas. Certainly, liturgical experiment is welcomed more readily in such congregations. There may be a number of reasons for this, including the greater literacy of many of the congregation, as well as the fact that the individual Church member's position in society or at work is likely to make him less patient with the traditional worship situation in which he has rather a passive role[59]. Furthermore, there is a greater probability of mobility in middle-class areas, and thus there may be less

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59 see ch.8.

resentment of change, because there is no one fixed pattern of worship to which all have become accustomed for many years.

A third point which emerges strongly from these discussions of local situations is the apparent paradox inherent in several of them. At Grahmston it is between the 'ordinariness' of the area and the 'secularized' nature of the worship and the Church structures; at Craigmillar between the apparent 'failure' of the Church and the 'success' of many of its activities; at Glenrothes between the apparently modern and urbanised society and the traditional attitudes still held. Yet, as was argued in discussion of the individual situations, there is often some reason for the apparent contradictions. That these contradicitons or ambiguities appear would itself seem to be significant, and indeed, perhaps almost inevitable in secularization discussion[60]. Gill has claimed that such ambiguity appears at every stage of the secularization debate[61]. The complex nature of the secularization syndrome would seem to make such ambiguity inevitable, but it is accentuated if a narrower view of the process is taken, and one key concept adopted as the dominant meaning of 'secularization'. Thus, in the case of the U.S.A., ambuiguity or paradox arises mainly if 'institutional decline' is taken as the key concept of secularization.

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60 The classic case of this paradox or ambiguity is the situation in the U.S.A., where, despite all evidence of a rapid shift towards a 'secular' society, Church membership is increasing in many places. This has been explained by Herberg in terms of the fact that religion is now part of the American way of life to the extent that it expresses American identity. (cf. Herberg, W., Protestant, Catholic, Jew, New York, Doubleday, 1955, esp. p.15).

61 Gill, R., The Social Context of Theology, p.125. Agreement with Gill's view of the essential nature of these ambiguities does not imply an acceptance of his 'alternating model' of secularization and desecularization. (cf. pp.126-31).

If, however, 'conformity' or 'transposition' are seen as equally significant, then the sense of ambiguity becomes less acute. Similarly, there is, for example, apparent ambiguity at Craigmillar because of the decline in institutional membership on the one hand, and the wide range of activities with which the Church is involved on the other. Yet if the complex nature of secularization is recognised, then decline in formal institutions, accompanied by this type of diversification is to be expected.

CHAPTER 15

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND

Introduction

The history and present climate of Religious Education in Scotland is very different from that in England and Wales. Discussion of Scottish R.E. was therefore excluded from Section III, but will be included here in the context of wider questions of secularization and the Scottish religious situation.

Whilst the same general principles of approach to R.E. and secularization will be employed here, the method cannot be identical with that used earlier for several reasons. Firstly, the paucity of Scottish R.E. literature[1] naturally limits the scope of the discussion. Secondly, R.E. in Scotland cannot be said to have gone through the same stages of development as in England, and therefore it is not possible to trace the process of secularization through these stages. Thirdly, and perhaps most funadamentally, the relationship between Church and school in Scotland is essentially different from that in England and Wales; it will be argued that the differentiation of R.E. away from the sphere of influence of the Church would not appear to have occurred to any marked degree in Scotland, or that it is maybe just beginning. This third factor inevitably affects all other attitudes to R.E.

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1 This paucity cannot be due to the fact that there is little specifically Scottish material, because English work is being used. There is a reluctance to use English material in R.E. as in other subjects.

The official position of religion within the Scottish educational system

As in the case of England two main issues arise here, the relationship between voluntary and state schools, and the formal and legal position regarding the teaching of religion in schools. An additional question which must be considered in the case of Scotland is the relationship of the established Church to education. As in chapter 10, the implications of these issues for the process of secularization will then be discussed.

Whereas in England there was a gradual evolution of the 'Dual System'[2], by which voluntary schools were brought within the state system while still retaining some measure of independence, and a variety of types of such voluntary schools remain, the situation in Scotland was, apparently, resolved much earlier and more conclusively. Under the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872, elementary education was brought almost entirely within the public sector[3] and within a few years of the Act, Church schools had rapidly dwindled in number[4]. This change came about with apparent ease, and the Act provided the safeguard of guaranteeing the teaching according to the tenets of the Presbyterian faith[5].

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2 cf. ch.10.

3 cf. Scotland, J., The History of Scottish Education, University of London Press, 1969, Vol.1, p.43.

4 This decline may be illustrated by the following table from Scotland, (ibid., p.43).

Year	C. of S.	Free Ch.	R.C.	Epis.	Others	Public	Total
1872	519	523	22	46	792	...	1902
1875	476	151	92	66	...	1935	2720
1880	145	39	126	73	235	2438	3056
1890	62	18	166	74	146	2651	3117
1900	27	6	188	68	71	2744	3104
1905	20	6	201	66	69	2882	3244

5 ibid., p.42.

The voluntary schools which closed after 1872 were mainly Presbyterian. Episcopalian schools grew slightly in number until 1890, after which they declined[6]. There was a far more significant rise in the number of Catholic schools during this period[7], and a situation arose of great disparity between the standards and conditions of the Catholic and the public schools. This was due to several factors, including the general poverty of the areas in which many of the schools were situated, the inadequacy of many of the school buildings, and the problems of teacher-training for Catholic schools[8]. Such evident problems as these meant that denominational schools continued to constitute a problem.

The Education Act of 1918 brought about the arrangement which has come to be known as the 'Scottish Solution'. This unique system provided support for the denominational schools, (by then, almost entirely Catholic), local authorities taking over the schools and their staffs, so that they became ordinary public schools in most respects[9]. The distinctive features were that the teachers were to satisfy the Church authorities 'in respect of religious belief and character'[10], and that the patterns of religious teaching already established in these schools were to continue.

> 'As a settlement of the difficult problem of religious teaching in schools for a minority, it is unique in the world, and its main merit is the concordat between the state and the local authorities and the Churches concerned.'[11]

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6 see table above.

7 This was largely due to the needs of immigrant Irish communities flocking into Glasgow and other industrial areas.

8 Few of the staff were prepared to train in Presbyterian or Episcopal colleges, and the nearest Catholic colleges were in Liverpool and Wandsworth - which expense as well as natural reluctance prohibited for most would-be students.

9 Education (Scotland) Act, 1918, Section 18 (1), (2) & (3).

10 ibid., 18 (3). The same phrase is still used today regarding appointments to denominational schools.

The 'Scottish settlement' is often praised in such terms as these[12]. Whilst it ended the ambiguities of the Dual System in Scotland, and made generous provision for denominational schools, it has also perhaps helped to perpetuate the separateness of Catholic communities in certain areas of Scotland[13]. It has also reinforced the popular conception of non-denominational schools as 'Protestant schools', a view which has some bearing on the relationship between Church and education[14].

Whilst the history of the relationship between voluntary and state schools in England may be seen to represent a certain secularization of education, with a movement away from the sphere of influence of the Churches[15], the same view cannot be taken of Scotland. The taking over of Church schools by the state under the 1872 and 1918 Acts was apparently easy, and done with little opposition. One major reason for this may lie in the fact that religion and education were not seen as distinct spheres of life[16], but in Scotland had always been closely associated on more than a merely institutionallevel[17].

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11 Brown, W.F., The Scottish Settlement, N.U.T., 1934, p.8; quoted in Robertson, J.J., The Scottish Solution; Religious and Moral Education in the Schools of Scotland, Church of Scotland, 1954, p.8.

12 e.g., Scotland, J., op.cit., p.46,

> 'The success of the arrangement made by the 1918 Act was clear; indeed it was a matter of envy in countries where the religious problem remained difficulty. A situation had been reached in which all the religious safeguards required by Christian Churches had been granted by the state, and there was no need on these grounds for any denominational school to stand outside the public system.'

13 cf. Robertson, op.cit., p.8. It would appear that prior to this Act there was far more integration of children from different religious backgrounds into denominational schools than there has been since the Act. (cf. Scotland, J., op.cit., Vol.1, pp.242-57).

14 see below.

15 cf. ch.10.

16 The concept of differentiation in this respect will be discussed more fully below.

17 cf. Scotland, J., op.cit., Vol. II, pp.271-2.

Therefore, under the Education Acts, education was not really seen as passing out of the hands of the Church. Hence Robertson's statement that,

> 'The public schools are to all intents and purposes denominational schools. Public and Presbyterian are practically interchangeable.'[18]

Thus, whereas in the case of England and Wales, the decline of Church schools may be seen as a form of secularization (either as laicization or, more specifically, as the transposition of religious beliefs and institutions), it is difficult to reach the same conclusion for Scotland, where the early and near-complete disappearance of non-Catholic Church schools seems to be an affirmation of the belief in a Christian society.

The same belief may be reflected in the legal provisions regarding the teaching of religion in schools in Scotland. With their frequent reference to 'use and wont' in this teaching, they never reach the same level of detailed provision as the 1944 Act for England and Wales[19]. The Education (Scotland) Act of 1872 emphasised the Conscience Clause[20] and thus restricted the teaching of religion to the beginning or end of the school day[21] to facilitate the operation of that clause. The Act of 1918 merely continued this provision[22], which it clarified in relation to the former voluntary schools. Under neither Act is Religious Instruction mandatory, except in those schools with continuing denominational status[23].

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18 Robertson, op.cit., p.4.

19 The 1944 Act must be viewed with some caution, however, in the light of the earlier discussion (ch.10) of the possibility that what was really being sought in 1944 was moral education for the post-war reconstruction of society.

20 Education (Scotland) Act, 1872, para. 68.

21 ibid.

22 Education (Scotland) Act, 1918, para. 7.

23 cf. Strong, J., The Education (Scotland) Act, 1918, Oliver and Boyd, 1919, p.16.

A step in the direction of compulsion was taken by the Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1929[24], which made it necessary for a public poll to be taken in any burgh before the education authority could discontinue religious teaching in its chools, thus implicitly affirming the concept of 'use and wont'. These, and the foregoing provisions were merely reaffirmed by the Education Acts of 1946[25] and 1962[26]. Thus, while the place of R.E. in schools in Scotland has always been assumed in the Education Acts, there has never been a clear statement of the positive obligation of schools to teach the subject as there is in the 1944 Act for England and Wales. This assumption that R.E. in Scotland has never needed such clarification would appear to underlie Lord Balerno's statement that,

> 'Religious Education in Scotland has gradually evolved without any particularly marked step forward at any particular period . . . for 400 years religion has been a compulsory subject in Scotland.'[27]

As in England and Wales, 'official' attitudes to R.E. are also reflected in the various reports on education, published, in the case of Scotland, by the Scottish Education Department. Statements on R.E. in these are fairly limited. The 1943 memorandum[28], contemporary

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24 cf. S.E.D., Memorandum with regard to the provision made for Religious Instruction in the Schools of Scotland, H.M.S.O., 1943, p.12.

25 The Education (Scotland) Act, 1946, Part 1, para. 8 (1).

26 The Education (Scotland) Act, 1962, Part 1, paras. 8 & 9.

27 Parliamentary Debate on Religious Education, House of Lords, 15th Nov., 1967, Hansard, (Lords) 286:8, col.798. The statement implies the compulsion of 'use and wont' rather than, of course, a legal compulsion.

28 op.cit.

with the major debates on R.E. in England, is merely a summary of the developments up to that time. Training for Citizenship[29] (1944), provides a close parallel to the debates in England at that time. Whilst stressing the importance of Religious Instruction in training for citizenship (i.e. moral and social education), it insisted that for this to be effective it must be done in the setting of a total school life pervaded by the Christian spirit[30]. This was followed by recommendations for the improvement of the teaching of religion in schools[31], recommendations which were repeated in the 1947 report, Secondary Education[32]. This clearly saw R.E. largely in terms of the Christian heritage of the country,

> 'We share the opinion, widespread throughout Scotland, that, since we inherit a Christian tradition, and the Christian Church is nationally recognised in Scotland, Christian education should find a place in every secondary school . .'[33]

Later reports however, had noticeably little to say on the subject. The 1963 report[34] simply accepted the assumed status quo in the statement,

> 'Religious Instruction has always been a characteristic feature of the Scottish school'[35]

without saying more on the actual teaching of the subject. The 1965

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29 S.E.D., Training for Citizenship, a report of the Advisory Council on Education in Scotland, H.M.S.O., 1944.

30 ibid., para.27, p.10.

31 ibid., para.28. These recommendations included adequate timetabling and the removal of the timetable restrictions as well as urging that there should be supplies of books and equipment. They also recommended (para.30) that the whole question of the training of teachers should be considered much more fully.

32 S.E.D., Secondary Education, a report of the Advisory Council on Education in Scotland, H.M.S.O., 1947, cf. paras. 566-70.

33 ibid., p.118, para.562.

34 S.E.D., Public Education in Scotland, H.M.S.O., 1963.

35 ibid., p.21.

Primary Memorandum[36], whilst making detailed reference to all other areas of the curriculum, had nothing to say on R.E. The reason for this was stated to be that the committee felt this to be a subject outside their competence[37], but its very omission would appear to be a reflection of the lack of real importance of the subject in the schools, and its lack of integration with other subjects.

It was against this background of the absence of positive statements about the teaching of R.E., particularly in the post-war period, with the resultant confusion in thinking about the teaching of the subject, that the Millar Report[38] was published in 1972. This report, to which fuller reference will be made below, provided summaries of recent developments in theology, educational psychology and R.E., and also presented the results of its own survey into the current state of R.E. in schools. Whilst it may be said that there was little in this report that was new to those familiar with the field of R.E., it was significant in that, for the first time in Scotland, R.E. was the subject of critical scrutiny and objective educational examination, thus facilitating the initiation of developments which had long been the practice in England and Wales[39].

Differentiation and Objectification of Religious Education

In discussions of the place of R.E. in England and Wales, the developments leading up to the differentiation of religious teaching

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36 S.E.D., Primary Education in Scotland, H.M.S.O., 1965.
37 ibid., p. ix.
38 S.E.D., Moral and Religious Education in Scottish Schools, H.M.S.O., 1972.
39 One example is in the appointment of specialist teachers and advisers in R.E., a recommendation which has now been implemented in many areas of Scotland.

from Church control, and the objectification of Religious Studies as a subject of the curriculum were traced. These two issues would appear to be of central importance for the whole question of R.E. and secularization, and it must therefore be asked how far they are applicable to Scotland.

Whilst it has been suggested above that the significance of the Millar Report lies in the development towards differentiation and objectification that this represents, this must be qualified by emphasising that it would seem that both of these processes of secularization would appear to be limited in the case of R.E. in England and Wales. These limitations may be illustrated by reference to the particular questions of examinations, specialist teachers, school chaplains, and the attitudes of the established Church to the teaching of religion in schools.

Firstly, there is the question of examinations in R.E. Whilst in England and Wales every examining board for the General Certificate of Education[40] conducts examinations in Religious Studies[41] at each level[42], with the regular entry for the examination showing it to be one of the more popular 'minority' subjects[43], there has been a consistent reluctance to admit R.E. as an examination subject in

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40 Although the reference here is to the G.C.E. examination, there is also a significant annual entry for the various modes of the Certificate of Secondary Education.

41 The term 'Religious Studies'is used here, although a variety of titles are employed by different boards, reflecting the range of content of the syllabus.

42 Ordinary, Advanced and Special.

43 In 1975, the entry in Religious Studies for the Joint Matriculation Board was 8.7% of the total at O level, and 3.7% at A level (J.M.B., Seventy-second Annual Report, 1974-5, 1975, pp.60-61).

Scotland. Although work for external examinations is, of course, limited to the upper end of the secondary school, the effects of such an attitude are reflected throughout the school system. The attitude on which this is based is summarised in Lord Balerno's statement that,

> 'This is another piece of good fortune which we have in Scotland, that we have freedom from examinations in Divinity . . . We in Scotland are reluctant to think that religion can be a subject in which good honest children could fail and in which clever little rascals could pass.'[44]

Whilst such a view fails to take account of contemporary aims and approaches to R.E., it would seem to reflect a common attitude to the nature of the subject. In its survey, the Millar Report found internal examinations in R.E. to be rare, and stated that only a very few schools had developed external examination courses in R.E. (for which they had to enter candidates for the examination of an English G.C.E. board)[45]. The committee was divided in its opinion on this issue[46], but finally came out against recommending the institution of external examinations in R.E. in Scotland[47]. The discussions in the Millar Report on this issue would appear to indicate an unwillingness to accept the full implications of the 'objectified', professional approach to R.E. which it is elsewhere urging.

Nowhere was this objectification urged more fully than in the question of specialist teachers[48]. It recommended the ending of the

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44 Hansard, (Lords), 286:8, col.797-8.
45 Millar Report, p.19.
46 ibid., pp.92-8.
47 ibid., p.97. The reasons given included the difficulties of administering and assessing the examination, but were chiefly concerned with the increasing emphasis on examinations as indicators of the status of a subject, and the belief that there was little value in the traditional 'Bible knowledge' type of examination.
48 Even in this area, however, there was some reluctance to accept the full objectification of the subject, as the Report hoped that the 'specialists' would still be teaching another subject (ibid., p.111).

anomalous position which made it difficult, if not impossible, for specialist teachers of R.E. to be employed in schools[49]. In the wake of the Report a number of authorities soon began to appoint specialist teachers and advisers in Religious Education, and in 1974, authorisation was given for a specialist teaching qualification in R.E.[50]. It is probable that the fully objectified status of R.E. within the schools will only be reached after there has been time for these developments to take effect, although the extent to which the subject may be objectified is largely dependent on the attitudes of all those involved with its teaching, at whatever level.

The question of the place of specialist teachers of R.E. relates to that of differentiation. For, in the absence of a specialist (or, indeed, any one person assuming overall responsibility for the subject), the school chaplain has sometimes acquired a special importance, thus reinforcing the popular view of R.E. as an essentially 'Church-based' subject. The Millar Report recognised this problem, and the difficulties posed by the position of chaplains for the understanding of the nature of the subject.

> 'Religious education's concern is to increase awareness and understanding in the field of ethics and religion without the weight of authority being thrown behind any one set of beliefs with the implication that that is the one that is normally to be accepted. It could therefore be regarded as an anomaly to have someone coming into the school and accorded a special position there whose whole function is to represent and recommend the Christian faith ...'[51]

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49 As Theology was not a subject acceptable to the General Teaching Council for purposes of registration, it meant that the teacher had to have his main qualification in another subject.

50 S.E.D., Circular no.916, 19th Dec., 1974.

51 Millar Report, p.107.

Whilst expressing this concern, and showing an awareness of the inherent problems, the Millar Report is still prepared to see a place for chaplains as 'consultants' on R.E.[52]. The lack of clarification of this role would appear to contribute to the continuing lack of differentiation in R.E. in Scotland, which would seem to be reinforced by the attitudes of the established Church to the teaching of religion in schools. As has been shown above, voluntary schools (other than Catholic and a few Episcopalian) disappeared from the Scottish educational system early in the 20th century, but although the state schools were theoretically non-denominational, the belief that they were, in effect Presbyterian, persisted. An examination of the reports of the Committee on Education of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland shows continuing evidence of the belief that the teaching of religion in schools is directly its concern. Thus, the Report for 1975, welcoming developments since the publication of the Millar Report, goes on to say,

> 'This is good news for the Church. But the Church cannot yet sit back and take its ease. There will have to be a long period during which the Church must encourage suitable young people from amongst its own members to take up this form of teaching . . .'[53]

Such a statement reflects the general belief in the appropriateness of a close association between the Church (usually the established Church) and R.E. It is this lack of differentiation which has perhaps impeded the growth of professionalism in the teaching of R.E. in Scottish schools.

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52 ibid., p.108.
53 Reports to the General Assembly, 1975, p.467.

The Aims and Content of R.E. in Scotland

It is against the background of the limited growth and development of R.E. in Scotland that the aims and content of the subject must be considered. In discussion of R.E. in England and Wales, the development of various aims and approaches to the subject was traced by use of statements in the various Agreed Syllabi. It is not, of course, possible to follow this method for Scotland, as the Agreed Syllabus is a product of the English R.E. situation, arising out of the 1944 Education Act. Furthermore, the body in Scotland most closely resembling an A.S. committee, the Scottish Joint Committee on Religious Education (S.J.C.R.E.)[54], is concerned with syllabus construction for the whole of Scotland, and there are not, therefore the same sort of local variations in approach as there are between the different A.S. in England. This, in fact, may be the cause of some of the confusion in thinking about what sort of society Scotland really is, and what sort of R.E. is appropriate for its children, as clearly a syllabus attempting to meet the needs of the children of the Highlands may fail to take account of the multi-faith situation in many parts of Glasgow. Because of the limited range of R.E. publications, it is not possible to trace the same stages of development of aims as in chapter 11. Comments here will therefore be of a more general nature than those made above.

The 1931 S.J.C.R.E. syllabus reflects contemporary approaches to the subject. Although there was no clear statement of aim, the syllabus was set out,

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54 cf. Reports to the General Assembly, 1974, p.458 for the constitution of S.J.C.R.E. Whilst many A.S. committees are also strongly Church-based, they differ from the S.J.C.R.E. in that there is usually a greater proportion of the membership directly involved in R.E.

> 'with the earnest hope and the sincere belief that it will provide a course of interesting lessons for the religious curriculum and secure for the children a wealth of spiritual teaching by which life and character alike may be enriched.'[55]

As may be expected of a syllabus of this time, the content of both primary and secondary levels was entirely Biblical. Later publications of the S.J.C.R.E. tended to appear not in the form of a complete syllabus, but of a very detailed handbook for a particular stage of the school, with full notes for each lesson of the course. So, for example, the second and third year syllabi[56] had no statement of aims, but lessons with very detailed background material. Those parts of the syllabus concerned with the doctrines of the Bible clearly attempt to apply that teaching to the situation of the children in a way that today would only be regarded as legitimate in the context of a sermon[57], thus showing that there is here implicitly, if not explicitly, a confessional approach.

A somewhat more open and educationally-based approach was taken in the experimental syllabi of the 1960's[58]. These recognised the

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55 Church of Scotland and Educational Institute of Scotland, A Syllabus of Religious Instruction for use in Scottish schools, Edinburgh, 1931, p.5.

56 S.J.C.R.E., Religious Education, a Syllabus for Secondary Schools, (Second Year), 1947; (Third Year), 1949.

57 e.g. Third Year syllabus, pp.18-19. It is not intended to imply here that teaching in this form may not also have been occurring in England and Wales at the time, but rather that this very detailed presentation in the syllabus makes it more likely that material was being presented in just this way in Scotland.

58 S.J.C.R.E., Religious Education, an Experimental Syllabus for Secondary Schools, Edinburgh, 1960; Religious Education, a Second Experimental Syllabus for Secondary Schools, Edinburgh, 1968.

shortcomings of some of the earlier syllabi in saying,

> 'too often the model for the Scripture lesson has been the Church service pattern of reading and address.'[59]

The aim of these syllabi may be classed as neo-confessional, in that it is stated as,

> 'to present to the pupils God's work of salvation as this is witnessed to in the Bible, and to show its relevence for life today. By the end of the course pupils should have some idea of what the Bible is about, and why it should be used as a prescribed book throughout the school. But such a presentation can never remain at the level of mere knowledge. The Bible witnesses to God as active in this world, as the only source of life to the full, as the one who must be obeyed. Such statements challenge as well as inform and press for decisions.'[60]

Such an aim, although here described as neo-confessional, would seem to be more positively directed towards, or assuming a greater general degree of, commitment, than many of the syllabi described as 'neo-confessional' in chapter 11. This more positively confessional approach is again suggested by some of the lesson titles and themes[61]. Again, the second-year syllabus, whilst presenting a clear and interesting study of 'What happens in Church', which, in some ways, could be used for advancing towards an objective study of religion, is totally Church-based, and therefore, in practice, much more likely to be used in an initiatory way. Both these syllabi take the form of detailed lesson plans. Although this was done explicitly for the sake of non-specialists teaching the subject[62], there would appear to be many

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59 R.E., an Experimental Syllabus for Seconday Schools, p. viii
60 ibid., pp. viii-ix.
61 e.g. the stated emphasis on sin and salvation (ibid., pp. ix-x), and lessons with such titles as 'Christ is God's answer to man's need' (p.37).
62 ibid., p. viii.

inherent difficulties on educational grounds[63], particularly where a teacher's views may be at variance with the explicitly Christian views of the syllabus.

The 1969 Secondary School Syllabuses[64] adopted an essentially pragmatic approach, in that a variety of possible programmes for R.E. were presented, the choice being based upon both the ability of the pupils and the resources of the school[65]. This material includes only one statement of aim, this being in the section on R.E. for the less able, though it appears to have general reference to the work as a whole. This is,

> 'to assist the pupil to acquire an understanding of the role of religion in the lives of individuals and society past and present, and also to guide the pupil towards a critical appreciation of the society in which he lives and of his part within the total social interaction which shapes the quality and character of that society.'[66]

The content of this work is diverse, and it does not seem to constitute a syllabus in the same sense as many other publications, in that several parts of it are merely a guide to text-books from which a syllabus may be constructed[67]. That the syllabus is essentially Christianity-based becomes clear from the fact that syllabus 3, (one of the few not to be totally Bible-based) takes as its second-year theme 'How men worhsip',

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63 With such detailed planning, it would be difficult to make the material relevant to either teacher or pupil.

64 S.J.C.R.E., Secondary School Syllabuses, Edinburgh, 1969.

65 Thus, text-book courses were distinguished from situation-based courses, as it was recognised that not all schools would be in a position to provide sets of text-books.

66 Syllabus C

67 e.g., syllabus 5a and 5b. (This is part of the pragmatism referred to earlier, in that whereas in England most secondary schools would be expected to have at least one R.E. specialist or sub-specialist on their staff, this was not the case in Scotland, and thus such a 'text-book' approach was clearly designed with this situation in mind).

but this is clearly intended as a survey of Christian worship[68], with the possibility of some reference to other religions as an 'optional extra'. Similarly, in syllabus 1a, material on world religions is used as an introduction to Judaism and Christianity, in what is described as a 'Bible-centred syllabus'. Social and ethical issues also play a large part in these syllabi.

Similar comments may be made on the primary syllabi. The 1953 syllabus[69] is confessional and entirely Biblical, and expresses the same aim as the 1931 syllabus already cited. Developments in the primary field have been in the direction of more thorough Biblical work (1967)[70], and the introduction of thematic work (1975)[71]. However, as has already been commented[72], even the latter syllabus would still appear to be essentially confessional, and seems totally inadequate for the wide range of themes usually to be found in the contemporary primary school[73].

Whilst there have been considerable developments in R.E. in Scotland recently, and further work in the field is expected[74], the range of materials is still very limited, and it is clearly not possible to trace developments through the same stages as were followed

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68 This was largely based on the Second Experimental Syllabus.
69 S.J.C.R.E., A Syllabus of Religious Education for use in Primary Schools, Edinburgh, 1953.
70 S.J.C.R.E., Religious Education, a new Syllabus for Primary Schools, Edinburgh, 1967.
71 S.J.C.R.E., Religious Education: Primary School Handbook, Edinburgh, 1975.
72 ch.11.
73 e.g. the 'life-themes' developed in the book, water, fishing, friends etc., are all aimed explicitly at the understandings of Biblical material and imagery.
74 From the recently-established Scottish Central Committee on Religious Education, a part of the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum.

for England. Part of the difference must be attributed to the basic differences in educational systems of the two countries, but there are also other factors involved. It was stated in chapter 11 that the confessional approach was appropriate when the school was seen as an arm of the Church. If, as has been suggested earlier in this chapter, differentiation between Church and School is not so complete in Scotland as it is in England and Wales, then it is not surprising that the official attitude to R.E. in Scotland retains a strongly, though not overtly, confessional element. This is not to imply that all R.E. teaching in Scotland retains this characteristic, but rather that the official position of the subject still reflects this aim. If it is still possible for such aims to be publicly endorsed in Scotland, then it would seem that secularization has not had such an impact on public thinking as it has in England and Wales. This being the case, it renders more comprehensible the reluctance in Scotland to undertake studies which involve the objectification of religion.

CHAPTER 16

SCOTLAND - GENERAL DISCUSSION

The preceding chapters in this section have attempted to examine some aspects of the contemporary situation in Scotland, and to analyse these in terms of secularization theories. The general conclusion suggested by this examination was that secularization does not appear to have had such impact on Scotland as it has on England and Wales. A number of factors may be seen to contribute to this conclusion, and many of these have already been discussed. This chapter will attempt to draw out the more significant points and comment briefly upon them.

Firstly, there is Shiner's initial category of secularization, - the decline theory. In Chapter 13, the question of the statistical strength of the major Scottish Church, the Church of Scotland, was discussed, and it was there demonstrated that whilst there certainly is numerical decline in that Church, the percentages of the total adult population in membership have remained fairly high, as have the percentages of members communicating at least once a year. It may, however, be contended that such figures are not representative as they involve only one denomination. Whilst this is true, the fact that the Church of Scotland is a national Church in a much fuller sense than, for example, the Anglican Church in England[1], means that figures for the Church of Scotland would appear to be significant for the picture of Scottish society as a whole. That there is this figure of 35% - 39% of the adult population in at least nominal membership of the Church of Scotland means that probably at least a half of that population is in Church membership of some sort. This is hardly suggestive of the massive attrition of Church membership so often

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1 This point will be discussed further below.

associated with the decline theory.

It follows from this that if those associated with education may be assumed to be a representative cross-section of the population, then it is reasonable to assume that a significant proportion of teachers will be Church members[2]. This being so, it may partly explain the persistence of 'confessional' or 'quasi-confessional' aims in R.E. in Scotland. However, this suggestion cannot be pursued too far, as the amount of R.E. that it taught in Scotland tends to be limited, and therefore, with this 'patchiness' of provision, it is difficult to think in terms of a generally uniform approach. (The lack of teachers qualified in the subject does make it probable that those who are asked to teach R.E. are more likely to have recourse to the S.J.C.R.E. syllabi, and this will thus increase the chances of there being some uniformity of approach and content.) The limitations of R.E. teaching in Scotland would appear to be a product of the problem of differentiation, which will be considered further below.

A second significant feature of the situation in Scotland must be the strength and status of the national Church, a Church which is perhaps unique in being established yet free of state control[3]. Its numerical strength has been commented on above, and whilst there may be dispute on, for example, the extent to which the General Assembly acts or is seen as the 'voice of Scotland', there would still appear to be a large measure of truth in the view that the Church of Scotland provides some sort of focus for national loyalty. That the Church is thought to be closely linked with national life is reflected on some

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2 Sociologically, this is the more likely since teachers will tend to be middle-class rather than working-class.

3 cf. Highet, J., in Mol, H., Western Religion, pp.149-51.

of the views of the place of religion in education discussed in Chapter 15, especially in terms of the view of 'non-denominational' schools as 'Presbyterian'[4], and in terms of the feeling that religion and education are essentially kindred activities, a feeling which meant that religion had a formative influence on the Scottish educational tradition[5].

Thirdly, it would appear that Scottish religion, as well as education, has, over the years, acquired a somewhat authoritarian character. The early emphasis on discipline, with considerable moral and communal power vested in the minister, has led to a tradition which, despite the apparent lay involvement through the eldership, means that there is little real lay inititative, and a general expectation of leadership by the minister. Thus there is also a certain willingness to accept changes instituted by the minister, perhaps because of this general expectation of being led. As the local studies show, where there is more willingness for lay involvement and discussion, it tends to be in more middle-class areas. This is, perhaps, indicative of a more general conclusion about secularization as a whole, namely that it is essentially a phenomenon if not of the intelligentsia, certainly of the middle-class[6].

An area of major importance in evaluation of the situation in Scotland is the whole question of the differentiation of religion from other areas of life[7], and objectification[8]. It has been suggested

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4 cf. 'the public schools are to all intnents and purposes denominational schools. Public and Presbyterian are practically interchangeable.' (Robertson, J., op.cit., p.4).

5 cf. Scotland, J., op.cit., vol II, pp.271-2.

6 cf. ch.14.

7 Secularization in Shiner's third sense, that of the disengagement of society from religion.

8 An aspect of Shiner's fourth theory, that of the transposition of religious beliefs and institutions.

above that the lack of socio-religious studies on Scotland and the limited development of R.E. as a school subject, would seem to indicate an absence of secularization in both of these senses. The limitations of the work in the field of the sociology of religion mean that it is difficult to reach any accurate assessment of the current religious climate in Scotland, but it may be that the very lack of significant change has meant that there has been little incentive for socio-religious studies.

The lack of differentiation and objectification is most clearly seen in the case of R.E. in such questions as examinations, specialist teachers, the role of school chaplains and the relationship between the established Church and religion in school. It would appear that in all of these cases there has been a reluctance in Scotland to allow R.E. completely out of the hands of the Churches[9], and to allow for its full development as a subject of the curriculum, to be taught on the same basis as other subjects. In practice, in spite of recent developments since the Millar Report, there is still comparatively little R.E. teaching in Scotland[10], and this has tended further to inhibit possible curricular developments.

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9 cf. the views expressed in Common Ground, (Dundee College of Education, 1976, pp.65-67), which would not appear to be atypical of opinions held in Scotland.

10 This is partly due to very limited timetabling of the subject, and partly to the lack of competent teachers, but largely due to the general feeling that R.E. is not an important part of the teacher's task. (This would seem to be especially true of primary schools). In some cases this may be due to a lack of interest, and this is reinforced by the fact that R.E. is not examined and is given little place in secondary school timetables. In other cases it may be due to the belief that children will be getting instruction in religion from their Churches or Sunday Schools, and that this is thus not the work of the school.

The question of differentiation and objectification leads on to a further point. Highet[11] commented on the 'feel' of Scotland, saying that its,

> 'cultural atmosphere is still that of a religious, - specifically of a largely Presbyterian society . .'[12].

It is perhaps this 'atmosphere' in Scotland which contributes largely to the reluctance to objectify the teaching of religion in its schools. An approach which is still in many ways largely confessional or neo-confessional is possible because of the general feeling that Scotland is a Christian country. Therefore, there do not seem to be the same pressures as in England to apply basic educational criteria to R.E., or to accept their implications so fully.

Finally, there is the fact of the underlying ambiguity of secularization. This was brought out particularly by the studies of local situations, and serves as a reminder of the difficulties of over-generalizations with secularization. Secularization is a syndrome rather than a single uniform process, and different aspects of the process are bound to be evident in different situations, and in this sense, Scotland is as clear an example as any other part of Britain. The processes of secularization may not be so marked, but the same apparent ambiguities between, for example, decline and lack of differentiation may be observed. It would seem that there will always be some sort of tension between the various forces of secularization.

Gill raised the question 'Has secularization reached Scotland too?'[13] It would seem that the answer to this question must be in the affirmative, but that the various processes of secularization have not had such impact on Scottish society as they have had elsewhere.

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11 Highet, J., 'Scotland', in Mol, H., op.cit.
12 ibid., p.267.
13 Worldview, XVII, 1974, p.38.

S E C T I O N V

CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER 17

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The aim of this thesis has been to describe, examine and analyse the wide range of sociological and theological changes which can be described by the term 'secularization'. After initial discussion of a number of these uses, it was concluded that secularization should be viewed as a syndrome, embracing several processes, rather than that any single definition should be adopted as the main meaning of the term. This conclusion rests both on the necessity of the recognition of the diversity of meanings of 'secularization' and on the fact that although the term is sometimes employed in a narrow sense (for example, simply to refer to institutional decline), it frequently has reference to a general trend of change both within the Church and in society as a whole.

Theological and sociological approaches to secularization

Relationship Part of the confusion in the general use of the term 'secularization' may be due to the fact that it is used in both sociology and theology to describe a wide range of doctrinal, attitudinal and structural changes. The various sociological meanings have been classified according to Shiner's analysis of i) institutional decline, ii) conformity to this world, iii) disengagement of society from religion, iv) the transposition of religious beliefs and institutions, v) desacralization, vi) the movement from a sacred to a secular society[1]. Similarly (although with necessary methodological differences) the theological areas have been classified according to the key concepts or issues of i) historical drama, ii) the problems of speaking of God in a secular

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1 See chapter 2 and 3.

age, iii) 'man come of age', iv) the world, v) the Church, and vi) 'religionless Christianity'[2]. It has been shown that out of this wide range of meanings it is possible to see close relationships between some sociological theories and certain aspects of theological change[3]. For example, the problems of the language of God, and the accompanying 'crisis of credibility' may relate to the decline theory, for, to a certain extent, they will affect the individual's attitude towards institutional religion and the likelihood of his participation. Similarly, the theological evaluations of the world and the concept of 'man come of age' can be related to the sociological category of 'conformity to this world'. There are many ways in which sociology and theology make reference to the same features of the general syndrome of secularization, although their emphases, methods and viewpoints may differ considerably[4].

Priority The close relationship between the disciplines of theology and sociology can be demonstrated in respect of their approaches to secularization. It is not, however, possible to establish the priority of either the sociological or the theological aspects of secularization. Although it may appear possible to suggest that the 'crisis of credibility' must be prior to institutional decline, this would be a gross oversimplification, for it may equally be argued that the 'crisis of credibility' only really becomes acute when the individual has already left the worshipping community. However, to argue for the

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2 see chapter 4.
3 These relationships are discussed throughout Section 1, and especially in chapter 5.
4 cf. chapter 5.

priority of sociological or theological aspects on either of these grounds would be to ignore the very complex nature of secularization. Any priorities established on the basis of such a relationship between any two aspects of secularization may be reversed if different aspects are considered. It is not possible to think in general terms of the priority of either the theological or the sociological aspects of secularization. All that can be said is that certain categories are more fundamental than others. It would seem that there is a more fundamental quality about dedivinization and the problems of meaningfulness of the term 'God' than there is about certain other aspects[5]. Whether these have any chronological priority to other types of secularization is impossible to ascertain.

The Manifestations of secularization

Secularization has been discussed according to various methods of analysis, and its impact on several spheres examined. Out of these discussions several important features have emerged, and certain key issues may be noted briefly.

Urbanization In Chapter 1 the problems of attempting to define the causes of secularization were discussed. It was there stated that it is to take too simplistic a view of secularization to regard urbanization as a main cause of the process. The local examples cited in Chapter 14 seem to support this conclusion, inasmuch as urbanization did not appear to 'secularize' communities or congregations. However, whilst urbanization cannot thus be regarded as a cause of secularization, it

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5 cf. Section 1.

would seem that it is in the highly urbanized situation that the effects of secularization are seen and felt most strongly. It was stressed in Chapters 7 and 8 that the nature and form of the worshipping community in urban society may be so drastically altered from the traditional 'village-type' community as to have a radical effect upon worship itself. It is also in the technological-based urban society that the problem of symbols and language in worship is most acute.

Dedivinization[6] It is in the area of Shiner's fifth category, dedivinization, that the disciplines of theology and sociology are especially closely related. Dedivinization describes the change from a society with a basically religious world-view, with a belief in a sacral universe and a strong sense of the numinous, to one in which the world-view is not dominated by these factors, and where the traditional barriers between the separate spheres of the sacred and the secular are broken down. It is because of its effect upon the world-view of society that dedivinization may in some ways be regarded as fundamental to other changes involved in secularization. This relationship is well exemplified in the statement that,

> 'What we call 'secularization' can be described as the reduction in social significance of the Christian, supra-empirical definition of reality. This is obvious in, (among other phenomena), the loss of significance and influence of the Christian Churches which try to preserve this definition of reality.'[7]

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6 cf. Chapter 3.

7 Laeyendecker, L., 'A sociological approach to secularization', Concilium, IX, 1969, p.9.

Differentiation The differentiation theory describes the process of the separation of religion from other spheres of life. Despite the fact that this theory may appear to contradict the theory of dedivinization, which refers to the breaking down of the barriers between the sacred and the secular, such contradiction is not inherent in the two theories, for whereas the latter refers to cosmologies and theologies, differentiation refers to the structural relationships between institutions.

The process of differentiation has been demonstrated particularly in the case of Religious Education. The development of R.E. as an independent area of the curriculum, professionally taught and externally examined, represents a major example of differentiation as the teaching of religion has moved out of the hands of the Churches and into the domain of the professional educators. It is difficult to know to what extent the legal provisions of 1944 which largely facilitated this differentiation were part of an evolutionary process of change or whether they were mainly reactions to particular historical circumstances[8]. It would appear, however, that in this case, differentiation occurred as a result of other changes rather than as a conscious policy of separation[9].

Conformity A major area of secularization is that represented by the category of 'conformity to the world'. The variety of observable aspects of this process was discussed in Chapters 2 and 4, and the

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8 cf. discussion of the influence of the war on the 1944 legislation in chapter 10.

9 Although the original differentiation does not appear to have arisen from a deliberate policy of separation, many educationists would now wish to make conscious efforts to ensure that the differentiation is complete.

examples considered there included the increasingly 'worldly' interests of the Church as well as changing forms of Church organisation. The process of conformity also affects worship, and the demands made of worship in a society undergoing secularization (for example, that it should be relevant and meaningful, and that its symbols and language should be appropriate to the communities in which it occurs[10]) would seem effectively to represent the process of conformity. In this situation, worship must conform to the criteria and standards which would be expected in other human activities. The changes in R.E. may also be viewed in terms of the process of conformity, both in the way in which the subject has been brought within the framework of general educational and curricular systems[11], and in the way in which the teaching of religion may be seen to have been used as a 'pawn' in order to gain greater state control of voluntary schools[12].

Decline The institutional decline theory seeks to describe secularization in terms of the declining numbers participating in religious worship and the decline of the general status of religious institutions. Although statistics can be adduced to support this theory, the number of other variables involved, such as changing attitudes to worship, different forms of religiosity and changing social structures, makes it difficult to substantiate this theory fully. A major problem with the decline theory is the standard of comparison of decline[13]. Furthermore, when new forms of Church life or 'revival' appear[14], they are

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10 cf. chapter 8.
11 cf. chapter 11.
12 cf. chapter 10.
13 cf. discussion of this problem, pp.24-28.
14 cf. chapter 4 and appendix 1.

often qualitatively different from the old forms, and therefore difficult to use in the evaluation of the decline theory.

The relationship between the decline theory and the changes in Religious Education is difficult to assess[15], for although the openness of contemporary R.E. may have been facilitated by institutional decline, the historical relationship is more problematical. The 'religious problem' of the nineteenth century in England and Wales centred around the question of the provision of appropriate religious teaching for various denominational groups within the general educational system. One of the fears of the time was that,

> 'undenominational religious teaching would . . lead to apathy, cynicism and irreligion . .'[16]

Although this may seem to suggest the kind of decline that some would claim has now occurred, to see such religious teaching as in any sense causative of decline would be to ignore many other factors. Firstly, the problem of the standards of comparison is acute here; secondly although the Cowper-Temple clause prevented the continuation of distinctive denominational teaching, much dogmatic Christian teaching remained, and thirdly, as up to the middle of the twentieth century nearly half the country's schools continued to be voluntary schools in which denominationational religious teaching was permitted, a significant element of such teaching will have remained. Therefore,

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15 cf. chapter 12.
16 Murphy, J., op.cit., p.14.

the development of relatively 'neutral' R.E. cannot be blamed for institutional decline.

Emancipation from religious constraints The view of secularization as a process of emancipation from religious constraints upon society[17], although discussed earlier in the context of differentiation and transposition[18], involves several categories of secularization. Emancipation will affect the status of institutional religion as well as of its doctrines. If the practice of religion and the acceptance of certain beliefs is no longer normative within society then there is greater freedom for the development of forms appropriate to the individuals and communities involved. (This will facilitate not only the growth of new forms of Church organisation[19] and types of liturgy[20], but may also be seen to underlie many of the developments in approaches to the teaching of religion in schools). In this situation of emancipation the motivation to worship may be radically altered, for many of the old motives may no longer be applicable. However, since the basic instinct of celebration seems to be fundamental in human nature[21], it is likely that worship in some form will continue despite the secularization of society.

Man's 'coming of age' The concept of man's 'coming of age' is a major factor in the secularization syndrome[22]. It is because of his maturity that man must live 'etsi Deus non daretur', and hence the crisis of

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17 cf. van Leeuwen, A.T., op.cit., p.16.
18 chapter 2.
19 cf. chapter 4.
20 cf. chapter 8.
21 cf. chapter 7.
22 see discussion in chapter 4.

credibility is, to some extent at least, a result of this concept. The 'coming of age' is both intellectual and scientific. If the concept is accepted, it must also affect theological evaluations of the world in which man lives. It is a challenge to traditional authority structures, and hence to the accepted social and liturgical structures of worship[23]. As man comes of age, he is emancipated from the former religious constraints, and in his more autonomous state, religious institutions lose their dominance. It is against the background of man's 'coming of age' that Religious Education sees it as part of its responsibility to help children to think for themselves about religion. Hence the shift away from a dogmatic confessional approach[24].

Evaluations of secularization

The wide variety of uses of the term secularization means that it is difficult to generalise about the evaluations of the process. No attempt has been made in this thesis to evaluate secularization, since the aim is to analyse the different concepts and their manifestations. However, the secularization hypothesis is accepted, and the arguments in Sections II, III and IV imply that secularization should be accepted as a fact of our time. Any evaluation must take account of both the potential and the limitations of secularization. Thus for example, the W.C.C.'s Mexico Conference on World Mission and Evangelism (1964), was,

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23 cf. chapters 7 and 8.
24 cf. chapter 11.

> 'neither optimistic nor pessimistic about the process of secularization as such. It should not be judged simply by the criterion of what it does to the Church . . . Secularization opens up possibilities of new freedom and new enslavement for man . . . It is creating a world in which it is easy to forget God and to give up all religious practices, and at the same time to lose all meaning and sense of purpose in life. Yet . . . it is not the mission of the Church to look for the dark side and to offer the Gospel as an antidote to disillusionment . . . Secularization appears as the revolutionary attempt of man to become emancipated from all forms of dependency . . .'[25]

The complex nature of secularization demands that evaluations must take account of all factors, and both its positive and negative effects. So any general condemnation of secularization, like any general welcome for the process, can only reflect a very limited view of the syndrome.

Secularization as a process

It has been emphasised throughout this thesis that secularization is a process. The manifestations of secularization in the areas of worship and Religious Education clearly demonstrate this idea of a movement of change. The verb 'to secularize' may obviously be used in both the active and the passive voice, although in most of the uses outlined above the passive would seem to be the dominant, 'society is being secularized'. In some cases, such as dedivinization, it is difficult to envisage a particular 'agent' of the secularization process. Even in the sense of 'conformity to this world', where perhaps, the most positive attempts to secularize are being made, there is an element of external pressure, often from other aspects of the secularization syn-

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25 Orchard, R.K., (ed), Witness in Six Continents, Edinburgh House Press, 1964, pp. 150-1.

drome. Thus, if a negative view of secularization is held, it is possible to speak of its victims[26], but if a more positive or wider view is held, then the liberating aspects are likely to be emphasised[27].

Ambiguity

Because secularization is a syndrome, comprising several different processes, it has inherent ambiguities[28]. Even the most 'unambiguous' of the processes, institutional decline, is open to so many questions and interpretations that 'unambiguous' is merely a relative term. When secularization is seen as a syndrome, in which many different aspects are operative, then the sense of ambiguity is increased, and appears to be an inevitable part of secularization. Ambiguities and complexities are to be found not only within secularization itself, but also in the responses to the process. Hence the ambivalent attitude of many towards it.

The impact of secularization

There are varying evaluations of secularization and its extent,

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26 Thus Wickham, writing against the background of a definition of secularization that is mainly, although not exclusively concerned with decline, says,

'The nation may be deeply secularized, but is victim of the secular forces, surely, rather than open-eyed, conscious and determined agent of those forces.' (Wickham, E.R., 'What should be the new look?' in Hunter, L. (ed), The English Church; a New Look, Penguin, 1966, p.148).

27 e.g., van Leeuwen, A.T., op.cit., p.14 inter alia. Here Christianity itself is seen as the agent of secularization. The same view is developed by Davis (God's Grace in History, pp.12-13).

28 cf. discussion of the ambiguities of secularization in the conclusion to chapter 14.

and differing views on the dominant factors within the process. Britain has recently been described as the

'most secular nation in Europe'[29].

Such a statement is problematical not only because it has reference in its context mainly to the institutional decline category, and thus takes a rather limited view of the process, but also because of the general reference to Britain as a whole. Although the processes of secularization can all be found in Scotland, it seems that the syndrome has not progressed to the same extent there as in other parts of Britain. The Church still holds an important place in Scottish society, and despite some evidence of institutional decline, a significant proportion of the population remains in practising Church membership[30]. Comparison between the status and form of Religious Education in Scotland and in England and Wales confirms that the process of differentiation has not been so far-reaching in Scotland[31]. Such differences serve as a reminder not only of the complexities of secularization but also of the fact that it has a differing extent and impact in different societies and communities[32].

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29 Longley, C., 'Changing face of Britain, 5: Religion', The Times, Aug. 10th, 1976, p.3.

30 cf. chapter 13.

31 cf. chapter 15.

32 Although certain features of the situation in Scotland, such as R.E. have been specifically compared with England and Wales, in other respects Scotland has been treated as a specific example without making reference to any other single area. If a specific study had been made of Wales, or of certain parts of England, this too would probably have contrasted with the general picture of secularization in Western society as a whole.

Secularization has been described as the

'riddle of modern religious history'[33].

That a process of social and religious change is occurring is evident and would be generally agreed. Documentation of secularization is fairly straightforward, especially in terms of structural or doctrinal changes; the problem of secularization lies in its interpretation which inevitably involves some degree of evaluation. A syndrome involving such major structural changes in the nature and relationships of religious institutions, which makes fundamental new assertions about the nature of man and the world in which he lives, which posits a radically different world-view from the traditional, and which questions the meaningfulness of the central concept and object of religious faith must be taken seriously both the Church and by society as a whole. Yet such changes, radical as they are, are only the product of and response to a rapidly changing world. Secularization, with its promise and its threats for religion, appears to be an inevitable part of contemporary society, which demands acknowledgement and appropriate responses.

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33 Obelkevich, J., Religion and Rural Society; South Lindsey, 1825-1875, O.U.P., 1976, p.330.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

Introduction

Whilst the purpose of the main body of this thesis has been to describe and discuss and various processes and developments which may be described by the term 'secularization', and to relate these to the specific contexts of worship, Religious Education, and the contemporary situation in Scotland, consideration must also be given to certain trends which appear to run counter to the secularization syndrome, and of these the Pentecostal Movement is the most significant example.

It is important to distinguish between the different elements in this movement. There are three main uses of the term 'Pentecostal' in this respect.

i) Classical Pentecostalism To speak of Pentecostalism is, strictly, to refer to classical Pentecostalism, a movement dating from the beginning of the 20th century, and arising as a reaction to the formal and institutional nature of many of the Churches in America at that time[1]. The members of these early Pentecostal Churches were frequently groups of the dispossessed or were suffering from some form of relative deprivation[2]. From the outset, one of their main emphases was the

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1 This is often seen as having its roots in the earlier Holiness Movement, which itself was a reaction against institutionalism in the Churches. (cf. Bloch-Hoell, N., The Pentecostal Movement, Oslo, 1964, p.12.)

2 cf. Pope, L., Millhands and Preachers, (Yale University Press, 1942, pp. 96-140), for a classic exposition of this relationship.

importance of the 'Baptism of the Spirit'[3] as a second conversion to a life of Christian holiness. Within the Pentecostal Churches, this Baptism is usually witnessed to by a 'speaking in tongues'[4].

ii) Neo-Pentecostalism This refers to the manifestation of the chief characteristics of classical Pentecostalism within the mainstream Churches, Catholic, Prostestant and Orthodox. It includes certain specific denominational groups, such as the Catholic Pentecostal Movement, (C.P.M.).

iii) The Charismatic Movement This term has a rather wider reference than Neo-Pentecostalism, although it may be taken to include the latter[5], the Charismatic Movement embraces the whole syndrome of awareness of, and stress on, charismatic gifts[6], in whatever context they are found.

For present purposes, the last two of these forms of Pentecostalism are of greater significance than classical Pentecostalism, but before discussing these, some mention must be made of the phenomenal growth of the latter in recent years. There has been a striking growth in

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3 This is basically, the gift of the Spirit as received by the disciples at Pentecost. However, there are varieties of opinion in Pentecostalism as to exactly what this involves, for,
''I have received the spirit' is not merely an expression of faith. The person baptised in the spirit requires an external verifiable criterion'. (Hollenweger, W.J., The Pentecostals, S.C.M. Press, 1972, p.330). Whilst glossolalia is frequently seen as this evidence, there is disagreement as to whether it is an obligatory sign of receipt of the spirit. (cf. ibid., pp.331-41).

4 'The utterance in prayer and worship of linguistic sounds expressing profound emotion, though not necessarily of an ecstatic nature'. This may include a language unknown to the speaker. (Sullivan, E., 'Can the Pentecostal Movement renew the Churches?' Study Encounter, VIII (4), 1972, (SE/35, p.2.).

5 ibid., p.1.

6 i.e., speaking in tongues, healing, prophecy, powers of discerning kinds of spiritual behaviour and exorcism (ibid., p.2.).

the Assemblies of God in the U.S.A.[7], and there have been significant developments in Africa, especially Southern Africa[8], as well as in Europe (where the growth in Italy is probably the most dramatic[9]).

The numerical surges of such groups as the Pentecostals has traditionally been attributed to the impact of their preachers on certain social strata, but the current large-scale growth raises certain more fundamental questions. The movement still provides opportunities for those on 'the fringes of society'[10], and, in such cases, is often a means not only of education, but also of giving members a sense of belonging and an importance otherwise unobtainable in the society in which they live. A new factor in the contemporary situation may be the rapid processes of social change, and particularly urbanisation, in countries such as Brazil. Against this unstable background, the simple yet in some ways exotic message of Pentecostalism may have a special appeal. Urbanisation also helps communications and the formation of groups.

Thus, this widespread growth of Pentecostalism must appear to challenge the decline hypothesis. However, in the case of the South American countries, numerical growth alone is not a useful statistic, unless expressed as a percentage of the total population, for in some of these countries, population growth is also very high.

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7 The numbers have risen from 50,386 in 1925 to 625,660 in 1969. (Hollenweger, op.cit., p.30). In Chile, Pentecostals now constitute 14% of the population with only 1% belonging to other Protestant Churches (ibid., p.64). In Brazil the Assembleias de Deus have grown in membership from less than 100,000 in 1930 to 1,400,000 in 1967 (p.78).

8 From 600 churches in 1939 to nearly 3,000 in 1967 (ibid., p.168).

9 Although the membership figure of 200,000 is fairly small, it is twice as many as all other Protestants together (ibid., p.252).

10 ibid., p.457.

Furthermore, it is difficult to relate classical Pentecostalism to the decline hypothesis as the earlier discussion on this[11] has not had reference to the countries in which this is occurring, and there are many different social and cultural factors involved. Thus, classical Pentecostalism cannot weigh heavily inthe present discussion.

Neo-Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement

These two developments are of greater significance than classical Pentecostalism as they are occurring in the 'developed' countries and against the background of the major Christian denominations. The best-documented forms have occurred within Catholicism and it is the C.P.M. that has shown the most significant organic growth. Such groups, however, spread right across the denominational spectrum. The C.P.M. appears to belong essentially to the late 1960's and early 1970's[12], and its origins are usually seen as lying in the rise of Pentecostal prayer groups in Duquesne University in the U.S.A. in 1967[13]. From there it spread to Notre Dame and Ann Arbor, and thence to Iowa and Portland Universities[14].

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11 Chapter 2.

12 Harrison, M.I., 'Sources of recruitment to Catholic Pentecostalism', Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, XIII (1), 1974, p.50. Others see the roots going back much earlier. Sullivan (op.cit., p.4) sees them as early as the period immediately following World War II, and cites van Dusen's description of them as the 'third force in Christendom'.

13 McCready, M., 'The Pentecostals: a social analysis', Concilium, II (8), 1972, p.112.

14 Moore, J., 'The Catholic Pentecostal Movement', A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain, VI, S.C.M., 1973, pp.79-80.

The Neo-Pentecostal Movement, consisting as it does of small prayer groups within established Churches, and cutting across denominational barriers, has been explained in a number of ways. McDonnell[15] has seen the success of such groups as lying in their cultural affinity with much of contemporary society.

> 'These movements belong to a post-literary culture which is experience-oriented, unstructured, spontaneous, inward, almost atomistic in its concern for the now at the expense of history . . To a greater or lesser degree, these movements represent a turning back to recapture the original, unstructured experience of the meaning of life at a level which, like tongues, is unutterable.'[16]

One major social difference between the classical Pentecostals and the neo-Pentecostals is that while the deprivation theory[17] is still largely true for the former, it is certainly not true for the latter. It has been shown, for example, that recruitment to the C.P.M. is predominantly middle-class, and that it has an appeal to intellectuals in a way that classical Pentecostalism has not[18].

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15 McDonnell, K., 'Pentecostal culture, Protestant and Catholic', One in Christ, VII (4), 1971.

16 ibid., p.315. Such a description is probably best applied to the account of the wide age-ranges (and therefore range of cultures) covered by the neo-Pentecostal movement as a whole.

17 This is the theory which sees a connection between real or relative deprivation (social, political or economic) and the tendency for people to compensate by joining exotic sects. These may be exotic either in the hopes of the afterlife which they preach (as in the case of millenarianism) or in some of the forms of spirituality which they practice (in the case of Pentecostalism the most obvious form of this is glossolalia) (cf. Wilson, B.R., Religious Sects, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970, pp.231-3 and Calley, M.J.C., God's People, O.U.P., 1965. Calley sees the origin of West Indian Pentecostalism as lying in the slave situation (pp.15-17) and he also comments on the relative deprivation of many West Indian immigrants to Britain (pp.136-42).

18 Harrison, M., op.cit., p.52.

Catholic Pentecostalism is rather different in its social stance from many other neo-Pentecostal groups. Whilst many are world-rejecting, Catholic Pentecostals are, on the whole, interested in and concerned for, many social issues[19]. In this way, the C.P.M. forms a sharp contrast with groups such as the American based 'Jesus Kids'[20]. This is a movement consisting largely of 'hippy-type' teenagers, deeply committed to a Jesus cult, with a stress on the charismatic gifts. Many live in communes[21], often having lived on the streets for several years previously. There is frequently a very strong fundamentalism, sometimes to the point of insistence that the King James Version is the only true form of scripture[22]! There is also, in many groups, a strong apocalyptic element[23]. Many of the members of these groups are, in one way or another, the outcasts of society[24], and thus, the deprivation theory can probably be applied here, although, by the very nature of a youth cult of this sort, many other factors must also be involved. One of the features of such a cult is transience, and it would seem that the upsurge of the Jesus movement is already over[25]. It is at this point that the true significance of the groups may begin to emerge.

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19 cf. Fichter, J.H., 'Liberal and conservative Catholic Pentecostals', Social Compass, XXI (3), 1974, p.306.

20 Many other titles are used, including the 'Jesus Revolution', 'Jesus people' etc. Although these groups have certain similarities, there is no uniformity about them. Those described in this paragraph are of the more extreme type.

21 cf. Simmonds, R.B., Richardson, J.T., and Harder, M.W., 'Organisational aspects of a Jesus movement community', Social Compass, XXI (3), 1974, pp.269-81.

22 Palms, R.C., The Jesus Kids, S.C.M., 1972, pp.77-8.

23 Wormus, J., 'The Jesus Movement', Risk, XI (4) 1975, p.39.

24 Palms, R.C., op.cit., p.22.

25 Wormus, J., op.cit., p.39.

Pentecostalism and secularization

Of the neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic movements as a whole, there are several questions which must be asked regarding secularization. Firstly, is the movement likely in any way to lead to a renewal of the Churches, and thus to reverse some of the trends of secularization?

In this respect, it is significant that the major Churches have, after initial hesitation, shown an accepting and welcoming attitude to the movement. In 1970 the American Presbyterian Church adopted,

> 'a position of 'openness' regarding the neo-Pentecostal movement within our denomination. The advent of it into our denomination may be one aspect of reformation and renewal.'[26]

Others regard the movements with rather more caution. Thus Sullivan[27], for example, is concerned about the peripheral nature of much that comes under the heading of renewal, and the basis on which any such renewal is to be built.

It is probably too early to assess the effect of such groups on the life of mainstream Churches. Whilst they may bring renewal, in various forms[28], there is also the clear danger of bringing divisiveness, and the creation of a barrier between those who have charismatic gifts and those who do not[29].

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26 O'Connor, E.A., The Pentecostal movement in the Catholic Church, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, 1971, quoted in Moore, J., op.cit., p.88.

27 op.cit., p.10.

28 'As the movement spreads, the Churches are going to gain, if only from the side-effects. . . The work of the Christian Church will benefit for years to come.' (Palms, R., op.cit., pp.69-70) Whilst this may be an optimistic assessment, there are likely to be benefits from this deepening of the Church membership of groups within the Church.

29 This danger was particularly stressed by the Panel on Doctrine of the Church of Scotland in its examination of Pentecostalism. (cf. Reports to the General Assembly, 1974, esp. p.182).

A second question concerns the relationship of the movements to the various Christian denominations. The Pentecostal movement, although stronger in some denominations than others, and in some cases taking specific denominational forms[30], is essentially non-denominational. A common receipt of the spirit transcends any formal denominational differences, coupled frequently, though not exclusively[31], with a fundamentalist approach to Scripture, is far more important to members than points of denominational doctrine[32]. It would therefore appear that the movement may be helpful in the development of ecumenical relationships, particularly arising out of common worship[33], thereby also opening up new understandings and concepts of the Church. However, there is also the danger of divisiveness, especially in view of the feelings of superiority held by some members of Pentecostal groups over those who have not 'received the spirit' in the form of glossolalia[34]. Whilst noting the great ecumenical potential of Pentecostalism, Hocken[35] sees many causes of possible schism within the movement. These include apostacy from the Church of origin, division between classical and neo-Pentecostals, the growth of 'charismatic enclaves', and the assertion of the irrelevance of all traditions and denominations in

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30 e.g. the C.P.M.

31 Whilst there is a tendency to identify the Charismatics with the young and fundamentalist, the situation is far more complex than this interpretation would suggest. (cf. Best, E., 'The interpretation of tongues', Scottish Journal of Theology, XXVIII (1), 1975, pp.52-3).

32 The movement has also helped to bridge the gulf between established denominations and classical Pentecostalism. An example of this is the openness towards the latter in many recent Catholic publications. (Hollenweger, W.J., 'Catholic Pentecostals', Learning for Living, XIII, (1), 1973, p.20).

33 Davis sees this as having particular significance in the Eucharistic context, especially where Catholics and non-Catholics have come to have wide experience of worshipping together. (Davis, R., 'The Charismatic renewal; impressions from a world survey' Study Encounter, XI (4), (SE/88), 1975, p.13.

34 Sullivan, E., op.cit., p.6.

35 Hocken, P., 'The Significance and potential of Pentecostalism', in Tugwell, S., Hocken , P., Every, G., and Mills, J.O., New Heaven? New Earth? Darton, Longman and Todd, 1976, pp.15-68.

the affirmation of the complete unity of the 'spirit-filled'[36]. It would appear that, in view of these problems, there are really two alternatives open to neo-Pentecostalism; either to become assimilated to the traditional churches by a broadening of its fundamentalist base, or to become a genuinely proletarian Church[37].

Thirdly, it may be asked whether the Charismatic and neo-Pentecostal movements in contemporary society represent a response to, or a reaction against secularization[38]. It can be argued that seeing the numerical decline and increasingly 'worldly' orientation of some traditional Churches, many have rejected this form of Church life for one that would appear to be 'uncompromisingly religious'. Thus, de Moura has defined the Pentecostal Movement as a,

> 'conscious or unconscious protest against existing political, social, economic or religious forms.'39

That there is this element of protest may be evidenced by the fact that whilst the traditional Churches often tend to underplay the 'experiential' dimension (at least in public worship), and thus overplay the 'ritual' and 'doctrinal' dimensions[40], the charismatic movement is unashamedly open in discussing areas of experience that

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36 ibid., pp.51-2.

37 These are the alternatives seen by Hollenweger to be facing classical Pentecostalism, but it would appear that, although some circumstances are rather different, the same basic issues face neo-Pentecostalism. (cf. Hollenweger, W.J., 'Charisma and Oikoumene', One in Christ, VII (4), 1971, pp.335-6).

38 The comments which follow must be seen in the light of the discussion of the decline theory in ch.2.

39 quoted in Hollenweger, W.J., Learning for Living, XIII (1), p.21.

40 Three of the six dimensions of Smart's classification. (The Religious Experience of Mankind, pp.15-25).

have become almost taboo in some Churches.

Yet while there is certainly truth in this argument, the relationship of the process of secularization to the development of the Charismatic movement is not a simple case of cause and effect as the above might seem to suggest. Since the time of the Old Testament prophets[41], there have always been protests against the over-institutionalisation of religion. It would seem that these movements, rather than being a reaction to secularization, are in fact, another form of this process. Shiner's third category of secularization, that of the disengagement of society from religion, would appear to take in just this kind of development. Whilst his statement that,

> '. . The culmination of this kind of secularization would be a religion of purely inward character, influencing neither individuals nor corporate action, and a society in which religion made no appearance outside the sphere of the religious group.'[42]

might seem too harsh a judgement to make of Pentecostalism, a number of features of the movements are those described here. Reference has already been made to the description of neo-Pentecostalism 'experience oriented', 'spontaneous', 'inward, almost atomistic in its concern for the now at the expense of history'[43], In this respect the development of religious forms showing these characteristics, would certainly seem to accord with Shiner's description. Moreover, if this definition of secularization is emphasised, it might be

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41 e.g., Amos, 5:21-25; Is 1:11-18; Mic. 6:6-8.
42 Shiner, L., op.cit., p.212.
43 McDonnell, K., One in Christ, VII (4), 1971, p.315.

inevitable that a growth of such groups should accompany a decline in the numerical strength of the institutional Churches, for Shiner's third category is, in a sense, a corollary of the first.

Furthermore, it may also be that the Charismatic movement is associated with the form of secularization described as 'de-divinization'[44], inasmuch as any concept of mystery is destroyed by the single-minded emphasis on the activity of the Holy Spirit in the contemporary world through the community of believers[45]. The simplicity and directness of the thought of many charismatics renders much traditional thinking on the 'sacral universe' superfluous.

Thus, as long as the neo-Pentecostal movement remains in its present form (that is, in the form of small groups, retaining many characteristics of the sect), there would seem to be a strong case for saying that it is part of the process of secularization, rather than a reaction to it[46]. Moreover, if to some extent at least, the movement may be seen as containing within itself a youth cult (and the charismatic Jesus Movement would certainly fall into this category),

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44 cf. ch.3.

45 This simplicity of approach is manifested particularly in the various forms of the Jesus movement.

46 There remains one special sense in which it may be a reaction. This has been seen in terms of the type of community structure which such movements provide.

> 'Modern man, as we know him from our research experience (often opposed to our theoretical speculation) still wants all the gemeinschaft he can find, be it in the extended family, the informal group on the job, or the religio-ethnic community which shields him from the impersonality of the larger society ..... He wishes to enjoy warm, intimate support of gemeinschaft at the same time as he enjoys the freedom, the rationality and the technological flexibility of a gesellschaft world.' (Greeley, A., 'After secularity: the neo-gemeinschaft society: a post-Christian postscript', Sociological Analysis, XXVII (3), 1966, p.125.) Whilst this statement does not have specific reference to the Pentecostal movement, the type of close fellowship which its groups generate clearly reflects the gemeinschaft on which Greeley comments.

then it may be seen as part of the ideologically diverse collection of cults which may arise as a by-product of the process of secularization.

> 'Primarily it would seem that the structural changes associated with secularization have been to the advantage of cultic culture. The decline in the power and influence of the Christian Churches has inevitably weakened their role as custodians of 'truth'.'[47]

Thus, on this view, such movements as Pentecostalism, as well as many non-Christian cults[48], may be seen as part of the pluralism subsequent upon secularization.

The Pentecostal movement can be interpreted not only in terms of the sociological aspects of secularization, but also of the theological. In one sense the growth of the Charismatic movement may be a comment on the contemporary state of theology and of the life of the Church.

> 'in the seventies there seems to be a growing disposition to acknowledge the reality of spiritual death in man, the absence of man from God.'[49]

In one sense, such a statement as this is a mere repetition of the 'doctrine' of the 'death of God'. In another, it is an opening for

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47 Campbell, C., 'The cult, the cultic milieu and secularization', A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain, V, S.C.M. 1972, p.31. Whilst again, the reference here is not to Pentecostalism but to a wide variety of forms of cultic activity, the same fundamental factors would appear to be present.

48 e.g., the contemporary interest in the occult.

49 Sullivan, E., op.cit., p.1.

any movement ready and willing to proclaim the Gospel in the freedom of the spirit. This, coupled with a sense of the authoritarianism and rigidity of much contemporary theology (at least as seen from outside)[50], may well mean that the Pentecostal movement is a reaction against some of the secularization within theology. The return to a simple gospel of redemption, backed by a fundamentalist approach to Scripture, is a classic reaction to intellectualism and increasing rationalism in theology, and this is particularly likely to occur when changes in the thinking of the Churches may be seen by some as dilution of the true Gospel, or as an over-accommodation to the world.

Secondly, while it would be rash to conclude that many of the characteristics of the contemporary charismatic movement could be equated with the concept of 'religionless Christianity', there would appear to be a relationship with them which is worthy of consideration. The centrality of a simple belief, the stress on the experiential dimension of religion, and, above all, the existence of charismatic groups outside the formal structures of the Church are all significant. It might be argued that this last similarity is especially important in that it points to the death of traditional forms of religiosity within Christianity. However, against this it must be remembered that Charismatics place great stress on certain 'religious' emphases,

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50 'The Jesus revolution rejects not only the material values of contemporary America, but the prevailing wisdom of American theology . . . The Jesus Revolution, in short, is one that denies the virtues of the Secular City and heaps scorn on the message that God was ever dead'. ('The new rebel: Jesus is coming', Time, 21:vi:1971, quoted in Leach, K., Youthquake, Sheldon Press, 1973, p.149.)

notably prophecy, and the other gifts of the spirit. It would therefore seem that although Pentecostalism may share with the idea of 'religionless Christianity' a certain protest against traditional forms of institutional religion, the two should not be equated. It may be more appropriate to see the movement as constituting something more akin to what has been described above[51] as the 'para-Church'. Thus it has been said of Pentecostalism that,

> 'Whatever its theological deficiencies and uncontrolled enthusiasm, it does seem to have rung a bell in the hearts of a host of people to whom traditional Churchmanship has made no appeal.'[52]

The theological context of Pentecostalism is far more complex than the sociological. While there is an obvious element of reaction against secularization in this respect, the similarities with the para-Church may well mean that once again, the movement may also be seen as part of the process of secularization. This is particularly true, in one way, in the question of worship, for whilst Pentecostal worship has little place for the contemporary image or the quest for relevance to modern technological and industrial urban life, it clearly has an appeal in terms of its directness, spontaneity and lack of formally imposed structures. Thus there may be a very real sense of liberation from established liturgical forms[53].

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51 cf. ch.4.

52 Clifford, P., 'The place of feeling in religious awareness', Canadian Journal of Theology, XIV (4), 1968, p.220.

53 This is probably particularly true for members of the C.P.M.

Conclusions

It has been suggested above that there are ways in which the growth of Pentecostal movement, in its various forms, may be seen as part of the process of secularization, as well as being, in other senses, a reaction to it. Thus there is a clear involvement of the movement, directly and indirectly, in that process. But Pentecostalism also raises certain questions about secularization, and particularly about the range and extent of that process. There is a tendency, when describing secularization within a given society, to suggest that it is likely to affect all members of that society in the same way, although the degree of the effect may vary. The story of the recent growth of Pentecostalism may go some way towards showing the falsehood of this idea of uniformity of response to the factors leading to secularization. Again, however, it maybe that this variety of response is in fact part of the diversification or pluralism concomitant with secularization. It would seem that this variety of forms of response is a further reminder of the complexity and paradox of both secularization and of contemporary society.

> 'it is fair to conclude . . . that some of the least secularized religious bodies tend to increase and the more secularized to decrease in strength in the same society where presumably the forces of cultural secularization are equally strong.'[54]

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54 Mol, J.J., 'Secularization and cohesion', Review of Religious Research, XI (3), 1970, p.184.

APPENDIX 2

PROVISIONS OF EDUCATION ACTS REGARDING THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN EDUCATION

A. England and Wales

1 The Elementary Education Act, 1870

Section 7

i) 'It shall not be required, as a condition of any child being admitted into or continuing in the school, that he attend or abstain from attending any Sunday school, or any place of religious worship, or that he shall attend any religious observance or any instruction in religious subjects in the school or elsewhere, from which instruction he may be withdrawn by his parent . .'

ii) 'The time or times during which any religious observance is practised or instruction in religious subjects is given at any meeting of the school shall be either at the beginning or at the end or at the beginning and the end of such meeting, and shall be inserted in a time table to be approved by the Education Department, and to be kept permanently and conspicuously affixed in every schoolroom; and any scholar may be withdrawn by his parent . . without forfeiting any of the other benefits of the school.'

iii) 'The school shall be open at all times to the inspection of any of Her Majesty's inspectors .. . it shall be no part of the duties of such inspector to inquire into any instruction in religious subjects given at such school, or to examine any scholar therein in religious knowledge . .'

2 The Education Act, 1902

Part II, Section 4

' . . no catechism or formulary distinctive of any particular religious denomination shall be taught in any school, college or hostel so provided . .'

Section 7

i) 'The local education authority shall maintain and keep efficient all public elementary schools within their area . . but, in the case of a school not provided by them, only so long as the following conditions and provisions are complied with:-

a) The managers of the school shall carry out any directions of local education authority as to the secular instruction to be given in the school . . but no direction given under this provision shall be such as to interfere with reasonable facilities for religious instruction during school hours;
c) the consent of the authority shall . . be required to the dismissal of a teacher, unless the dismissal be on grounds connected with the giving of religious instruction in the school . .'

3 The Education Act, 1944

Part II, Section 25

i) ' . . the school day in every county school and in every voluntary school shall begin with collective worship on the part of all pupils in attendance at the school, and the arrangements made therefore shall provide for a single act of worship unless . . the school premises are such as to make it impracticable to assemble them for that purpose.'
ii) 'Subject to the provisions of this section, religious instruction shall be given in every county school and every voluntary school.'
iii) 'It shall not be required, as a condition of any pupil attending any county school or any voluntary school, that he shall attend or abstain from attending any Sunday school or any place of religious worship.'
iv) 'If the parent of any pupil . . requests that he be wholly or partly excused from attendance at religious worship in the school, or from attendance at religious instruction . . the pupils shall be excused . . accordingly.'
v) 'Where any pupil has been wholly or partly excused from attendance at religious worship or instruction in any school . . and the local education authority are satisfied:-
a) that the parent of the pupil desires him to receive religious instruction of a kind which is not provided in the school during the periods during which he is excused from such attendance;
b) that the pupil cannot with reasonable convenience be sent to another county or voluntary school where religious instruction of the kind desired by the parent is provided; and
c) that arrangements have been made for him to receive religious instruction during school hours elsewhere, the pupil may be withdrawn from the school during such hours as reasonably necessary for the purpose of enabling him to receive religious instruction in accordance with the arrangements.'

Section 26

'. . the collective worship required by subsection i) of the last foregoing section shall not in any county school, be distinctive of any particular religious denomination, and the religious

instruction given to any pupils in attendance at a county school in conformity with subsection ii) of the said section shall be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus adopted for the school or for those pupils and shall not include any catechism or formulary which is distinctive of any particular religious denomination.'

Section 27

i) 'Where the parents of any pupils in attendance at a controlled school request that they may receive religious instruction in accordance with the provisions of the trust deed . . or where provision for that purpose is not made, . . the foundation managers . . shall .. make arrangements for securing that such religious instruction is given to those pupils . . during not more than two periods in each week.'

ii) '. . the teaching staff shall include persons (hereinafter referred to as 'reserved teachers') selected for their fitness and competence to give such religious instruction as is required to be given under such arrangements . . the number of reserved teachers in any controlled school shall not exceed one-fifth of the number of the teaching staff of the school . .'

vi) '. . The religious instruction . . at a controlled school shall be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus.'

Section 28

i) 'The religous instruction given to the pupils in attendance at an aided school or a special agreement school shall be under the control of the managers of governors of the school and shall be in accordance with the trust deed relating to the school . .'

ii) 'If a teacher appointed to give in an aided school religious instruction other than instruction in accordance with an agreed syllabus, fails to give such instruction efficiently and suitably, he may be dismissed on that ground . .'

Section 29

i) 'The provisions of the Fifth Schedule to this Act shall have effect with respect to the preparation, adoption and reconsideration, of an agreed syllabus of religious instruction.'

ii) 'A local education authority shall have power to constitute a standing advisory council on religious education to advise the authority upon matters connected with religious instruction to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus.'

Section 30

' . . no person shall be disqualified by reason of his religious opinions, or of his attending or omitting to attend religious worship, from being a teacher in a county school or in any

voluntary school . . and no teacher in any such school shall be required to give religious instruction or . . disqualified for any promotion or other advantage by reason of the fact that he does or does not give religious instruction. .'

Fifth Schedule to 1944 Act Procedure for bringing into operation an Agreed Syllabus of Religious Instruction

i) 'For the purpose of preparing any syllabus of religious instruction to be adopted by a local education authority, the authority shall cause to be convened a conference constituted in accordance with the provisions of this schedule.'

ii) 'For the purpose of constituting such a conference as if or said, the local education authority shall appoint constituent bodies . . consisting of persons representing respectively -
   a) such religious denominations as, in the opinion of the authority, ought, having regard to the circumstances of the area, to be represented:
   b) except in the case of an area in Wales or Monmouthshire, the Church of England;
   c) such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the authority, ought, having regard to the circumstance of the area to be represented; and
   d) the authority.'

B. Scotland

1 The Education (Scotland) Act, 1872

68.'Every public school, and every school subject to inspection and in receipt of any public money . . shall be open to children of all denominations, and any child may be withdrawn by his parents from any instruction in religious subjects and from any religious observance in any such school; and no child shall be placed at any disadvantage with respect to the secular instruction given therein by reason of the denomination to which such child or his parents belong, or by reason of his being withdrawn from any instruction in religious subjects. The time or times during which any religious observance is given at any meeting of the school for elementary instruction shall be either at the beginning or at the end. .'

2 The Education (Scotland) Act, 1918

Section 7

'Whereas it has been the custom in the public schools of Scotland

to give instruction in religion to children whose parents did not object to the instruction so given, but with liberty to parents . . to elect that their children should not receive such instruction, be it enacted that education authorities shall be at liberty to continue the said custom, subject to the provisions of section 68 (Conscience clause) of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872.'

Section 18 Voluntary schools

iii) 'Any school so transferred shall be held, maintained and managed as a public school by the education authority, who shall be entitled to receive grants therefore as a public school and shall have in respect thereto the sole power of regulating the curriculum and of appointing teachers:
Provided that -

i) the existing staff of teachers shall be taken over by the education authority . .

ii) all teachers appointed to the staff of any such school . . shall in every case be teachers who satisfy the Department as to their qualification, and are approved as regards their religious belief and character by representatives of the Church or denominational body in whose interest the school has been conducted:

iii) subject to the provisions of section 68 .. of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872, the time set apart for religious instruction or observance in any such school shall not be less than that so set apart according to the use and wont of the former management of the school, and the education authority shall appoint as supervisor without remuneration of religious instruction for each such school, a person approved as regards belief and character as aforesaid, and it shall be the duty of the supervisor so appointed to report . . as to the efficiency of the religious instruction given in such school. The supervisor shall have right of entry at all times set apart for religious instruction or observance.'

3 The Education (Scotland)Act, 1946

Section 8

i) 'Whereas it has been the custom in the public schools of Scotland for religious observance to be practised and for instruction in religion to be given to pupils whose parents did not object to such observance or instruction, but with liberty to parents . . . to elect that their children should not take part in such observance or receive such instruction, be it enacted that education authorities shall be at liberty to continue the said custom, subject to the provisions of section 9 of this act.'

ii) 'It shall not be lawful for an education authority to discontinue

religious observance or the provision of instruction in religion in terms of the last foregoing subsection unless and until a resolution in favour of such discontinuance duly passed by the authority has been submitted to a poll of the local government electors . . and has been approved by a majority.'

Section 9

'Every public school and every grant-aided school shall be open to pupils of all denominations, and any pupil may be withdrawn by his parents from any instruction in religious subjects and from any religious observance . . . The time or times during which any religious observance is practised or instruction in religious subjects is given at any meeting of the school shall be specified in a table approved by the Secretary of State.'

4 The Education (Scotland) Act, 1962 Repeats the above provisions of the 1946 Act.

The timetable ruling of Section 9 was repealed in 1969. (Education (Scotland) Act, 1969, Schedule 3).

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